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ABSTRACT

The two issues of the journal SKOLE for 1994 contain original articles and reprints about small alternative schools, home schooling, the contradictions and deficiencies of public education, and educational innovations. Major articles include: (1) "Reunion" (about Rockland Project School, New York) (Alice Gerard); (2) "Children's Village: The Evolution of an Alternative School" (in Japan) (Kuniko Kato); (3) "Absolute Absolution: The Forgiveness of Original Sin by Ministers of Government Schooling" (John Taylor Gatto); (4) "Hail to the Victors: Home Educators of Michigan" (Pat Montgomery); (5) "What It's 'Really' Like To Be Black" (Claire Saffian); (6) "The National Extortion Association?" (about the National Education Association) (Peter Brimelow, Leslie Spencer); (7) "Walking Wounded: A Way of Life?" (about survivors of child abuse) (Bennet Wong, Jock McKeen); (8) excerpt from "The End of Evolution" (about learning processes) (Joseph Chilton Pearce); (9) excerpts from "Educating the Entire Person" (Ron Dultz); (10) "Who's in Charge at the C-School?" (about the Community School, Camden, Maine) (Bill Halpin); (11) "Stonesoup Journal" (Dan Huston); (12) "Miracle on 45th Street" (about P.S. 51, New York City, New York) (Lydia Green); (13) "Concentration" (about the Free School, Albany, New York) (Chris Mercogliano); (14) "A Map, a Mirror, and a Wristwatch" (about educational strategies to undo the damage inflicted by public education) (John Taylor Gatto); (15) "The Transcendentalists: Humanistic Educators of the Early Nineteenth Century" (Ron Miller); (16) "Schooling + Diplomas = Jobs?" (Pat Farenga); (17) "Information on Eureka Free University Seminar Project" (in Russia) (Jerry Mintz and friends); (18) "Son-Rise: The Miracle Continues" (growth and healing of an autistic child) (Barry Neil Kaufman); (19) "Nine Years of NCACS Doings" (collection of items from the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools newsletter); (20) "Madalyne" (a first grade's acceptance of a special needs student) (Holly Engel); and (21) "Myles Horton (1905-90) of Highlander: Adult Educator and Southern Activist" (Franklin Parker, Betty J. Parker). The journal also contains poems, letters, reviews of books and videos, interviews, and student writings. (SV)

ED 399 093

ΣΚΟΛΕ

THE JOURNAL OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

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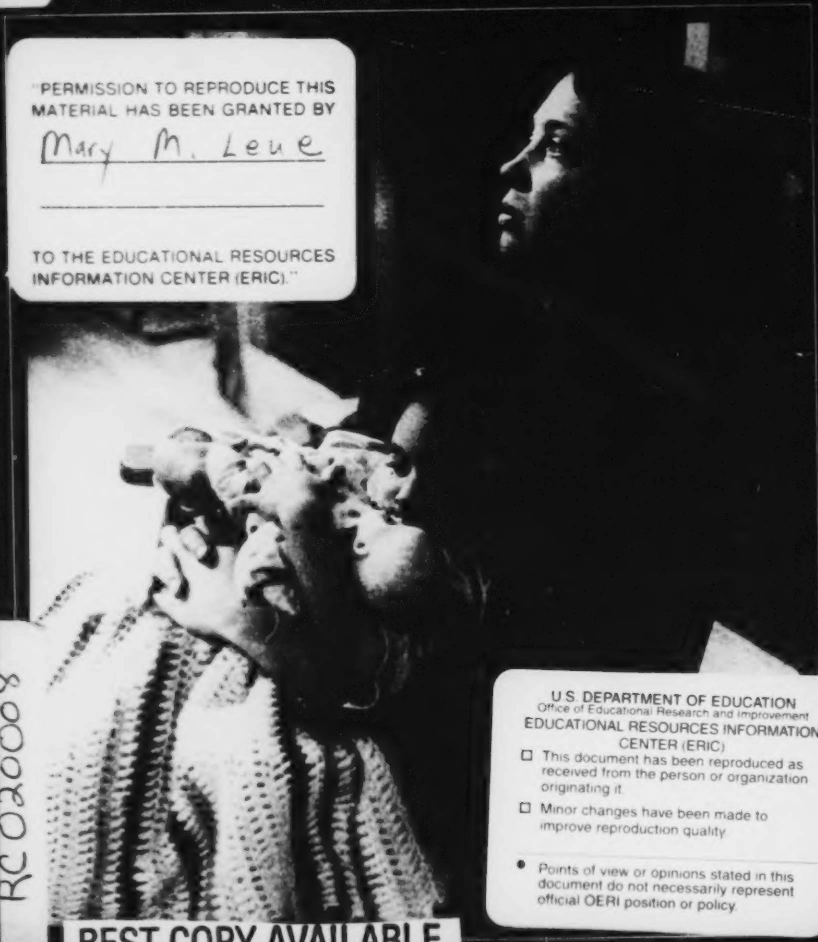

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Winter, 1994 Vol. XI, No. 1

ΣΚΟΛΕ ("Sko-lay," meaning "school" as defined by the ancient Greeks, an activity conducted on an on-going basis, as part of the awakening of awareness and contact with one's world) appears twice a year. It publishes articles related to the subject of alternatives or innovations in education, critiques of other forms of education, theoretical considerations associated with schools, schooling, learning and teaching, as well as accounts of individual schools themselves and "how-to" articles. We welcome manuscripts by educators, interested by-standers, parents and thoughtful students of all ages. Interesting photographs showing activities connected with learning/teaching are in great demand. I used to say they wouldn't be returned, but I haven't been getting any at all—so now I will, I will! Please send me some pictures!

Material to be submitted for publication must be received by the November 15 and May 15 deadlines. Manuscripts will not be returned unless extreme emotional blackmail has been practiced by the author, and should be typed with nice black type. Best of all, put them on a Mac, and send us a disk! Send your material to Mary Leue, editor, 72 Philip St., Albany, NY 12202.

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Inquiries concerning membership in NCACS (the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools) or subscription rates to **ΣΚΟΛΕ** as a member or member school of the National Coalition—or for a subscription to the NCACS Newsletter—should be addressed to Ed Nagel, NCACS National Office Manager, P.O. Box 15036, Santa Fe, NM 87506.

ΣΚΟΛΕ

the Journal of Alternative Education

Volume XI, No. 1 **Winter, 1994.**

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The first poem was written when Chris returned from several weeks of being with his mother as she lay dying of cancer in the hospital.

Born Again

In the paper thinness of the early morning,
she turned to gaze through the window
toward the dawning of the timeless beyond.
As she breathed her last breaths,
which were like newborn breaths,
the room grew so incredibly silent,
still filling with morning light.

Where is she now?

Like an expectant father I awaited her new beginning,
my joy and my grief entwined
like naked lovers bathing in sun drenched fog.
As she left I kissed her hand,
wrapped her gifts loosely in my heartcloth,
and made the room ready for her guests.

Where is she now?

Be Still!

Be still!
Let the breath
breathe you.
Unfocus the eyes and
see without looking.
Listen within
(without) listening.
What we call reality
is a silver stranded web
woven by night spiders.
In the morning,
be still!
and embrace the web.
The delicate thread
will-----not-----break.
This is God's promise!

EDITORIAL COMMENT:

This issue of ΣΚΟΛΕ, which is being put together during both the Advent and Hannukah seasons, is your editor's response to the increasingly horrifying events that seem to be taking place in the world. It feels very important to me to assert the goodness that still works among us in countless forms at a time when so many human beings appear to me to be choosing—intentionally or inadvertently—to express themselves destructively, in varying degrees up to and including death, of the self or of others.

It has been said many times that children are the future of mankind. Thus, it is among the children that acts of love and tenderness have their most exalted expression, working as beacons of light for human beings by which they may find their way. The Free School in Albany is one such center of light. One feels it immediately on entering the building. Many, many alternative schools are equally special. It is to the existence of such places that this journal owes whatever relevance it may have in shaping the future of our world.

I have included photographs taken by Betsy Mercogliano at our school and poems written by her husband Chris as symbols of this peace and light. The articles in this issue represent a spectrum of the possible and the actual in helping to create a more hopeful future. In my view, the responses made by each of these writers, representing as they do, the integrity and heart-centered purpose of each of them, are infinitely more significant, *for this fact*, than merely in terms of the objective content they are representing. To choose one "way" over all the others is, for me, to misplace the solution to our problems by suggesting that it lies primarily in ideology. This is the mistake made by so many religions in assigning holiness to adherence to dogma, rather than to purity of heart. There are as many "ways" to offer children a better life as there are good-hearted adults to work with them. The Universals of respect, tolerance, love, enjoyment, participation, spontaneity, patience and involvement which children need have many avenues of expression, including many very different kinds of institutional settings, all the way from homeschooling to public school classrooms. I believe it is important to recognize the universals being expressed and put organizational details in second place. This is the person-centered view.

PROFILED SCHOOL:
Rockland Project School

REUNION

by Alice Gerard

Twenty-three years ago, in the fall of 1969, I was one of four public school teachers who quit their jobs to open an alternative school in Rockland County, New York. We were heavily influenced by A.S. Neill's *Summerhill* and George Leonard's *Education and Ecstasy*, and we designed a school full of learning environments where nobody had to attend classes unless they wanted to. By Christmas of that year we had forty students, and we were learning as much as they were.

I think I had had a mental picture of happy students doing school-like things because they wanted to, not because they had to. Instead, the kids spent a lot of their time running around and playing, sometimes getting into fights, destroying school materials, and being mean to each other. Sometimes they asked for classes with us but often they decided at the last minute that they didn't really want to come. Occasionally we all got involved in projects that led to real learning and good feelings. One example was a local history class which excavated a lost nineteenth century community, with proper archaeological techniques. Their records were used later by a Columbia University graduate student writing her thesis on the same community.

We played a lot of music, and sang together often. Norman, one of the teachers, built a playhouse with kids. All of us went on countless hikes, and every June we camped for a week with the whole school. We had school newspapers and made things out of clay and wood. There was a yearly Fair, and wonderful plays written by the students.

At the beginning we had daily morning meetings where each student and staff member had one vote, and a different child chaired the meeting each time. This itself was a powerful learning tool, as was our 'Stop Rule.' This rule, a child's version of the Golden Rule, stated that if someone was bothering you, in any way, you had a right to say 'Stop' and they were supposed to stop. If someone hit you, you were not allowed to retaliate physically. Instead, you were supposed to say 'Stop' and tell them what you wanted them to stop and why you felt that way. Our students became skilled at problem-solving with words instead of fists, because we cared so much about this rule.

Our academic curriculum, however, was a real hodgepodge because we were always trying to entice kids to come to class by thinking of something new and interesting. Since they didn't write unless they felt like it, many kids had poor skills in this area. We all had a wonderful time, most of the time, but there wasn't a great deal of academic continuity.

Over the years Rockland County, where we were located, became more conservative. Our parents were not wealthy, and they began to want assurances that their children would learn enough skills to be able to support themselves as adults. At the beginning, our students had been middle class kids, mostly from intact families, who already had many of their basic math and reading skills. With time, that changed. More students came from broken families, and were lacking a core of common knowledge that earlier students had had. They read less and watched a great deal of television. Some of them, when unsupervised, were really destructive. Gradually we took away choices for students. By 1980 we were asking students to go to math and reading classes, and later we scheduled them for all classes, although they still had an hour and a half of free play time a day. By the end, the free time was down to about an hour a day. It was still a special, happy place, for children and for teachers.

All three of the other original founders eventually left, for a larger arena and higher salaries. The school, which had been dependent for many years on a small endowment, ran out of money and students in 1990, after twenty-one years, and closed in June of that year.

In early 1991 I started working on a book about several alternative schools from the same period. This gave me a chance, after twenty-seven busy years of teaching, to read, think, talk to teachers, and visit schools. Much has happened in the field of education since I was a student at Bank Street. I have had to reexamine my beliefs about teaching and learning and to develop a much larger perspective.

Two of the schools I am writing about, the Barker School (later Collaberg) in Stony Point, and my own Rockland Project School, are now closed. Visits to the other three: Meade, in Greenwich, Connecticut, the Free School in Albany, and Sudbury Valley in Framingham, Massachusetts, have been heartening and exciting. Alternative education is still alive and well in a few places, and has now been in existence long enough to evaluate the experiences of some of the early graduates. Sudbury Valley has been working on an exhaustive follow-up of graduates, and promises to publish soon.

One of the things I began to wonder about was what had happened to the Project School students from the early years, the ones who seldom went to class. Were they able to function in 'real life' even though they had spent a large part of school playing and hanging out with friends? Had they been academically handicapped?

In June, 1991, I arranged for a Project School reunion, a weekend at a camp in Harriman Park. Over a hundred people came and it was a great success. The most valuable part for me, however, was to meet again those students from the first few years, when no one had to go to classes. I should have known that they would be capable, interesting, responsible people. They had managed the transition to other schools and often gone on to college. Valerie, after the University of Michigan, became a private investigator who handles everything except matrimonial cases. Steven J., a wiry kid who was always jumping from windowsills, was a competitive gymnast in college and now runs a fitness center. Sam G is an artist who works at a gas station and sells decorated T shirts to survive economically. Jeremy has a job teaching at an alternative school, Rachel is finishing up a graduate degree in holistic medicine, and Josh R., over whom I agonized because he didn't complete things, has just moved upstate and started a new job in a recording studio, continuing an interest in music which began at the Project School.

All of the young people who showed up looked back to their years at the Project School as having been a special, wonderful time. This quotation from Michele Mark, who wrote instead of attending the reunion, is typical of the feelings they expressed. 'At the conclusion of my first semester in the graduate program, I await grades and wistfully remember classes without them. Project School played such a vital role in my life, and I am often struck by how differently I view learning, teaching, and authority than my peers of more traditional backgrounds. As naive as it sounds to so many, I honestly believe that people do learn when they are ready. 'Despite' (because of, perhaps) three and a half years of unstructured education, I have never been behind my peers in public schools, and my ability to constructively structure my own time and activities has given me an advantage in every school and job I've been at since Project School.'

The stories of two students, however, were particularly meaningful to me. One was Jeff R., now a tall, good-looking young man in his early twenties. Jeff transferred to R.P.S. when he was nine and having difficulty in public school with the work itself and with his teachers. By the time he came class attendance was mandatory for some subjects. I was Jeff's Language Arts teacher and I had a terrible time with him. I couldn't motivate him to work and his behavior in class was sporadically extremely disruptive, although we got on fine outside of class. He behaved much better for Norman, who taught him math, and this was frustrating for me because I felt I must be doing something wrong. When Jeff told me about his life after the Project School, however, I realized what a limited perspective I had had.

He left us when he was twelve and went to a nearby private school, from which he was expelled at the end of the first year. He spent his public high school years cutting classes and getting poor grades, and left school for good as soon as his parents allowed him to. After a succession of unsatisfactory jobs, both for him and for his employers, he accidentally discovered something he could do Well. This was sheet metal work, a profession which takes strength and a high level of intuitive mathematical skill. Jeff told me, "I discovered I was a math genius!" He had always hated reading, writing, and anything to do with language because he couldn't do it well enough. Conventional math was hard for him also, but he told me that the first time he realized he could do something well was when Norman built the play house by the back door of the school with the boys Jeff's age and left, because of his interest and ability, became Norman's right hand man on the job.

I don't know whether his experience with language skills would have been different if he had come to our school earlier. It's clear to me now, however, that Jeff was someone who didn't fit into conventional schooling at all, and our attempts to get him to, no matter how humane, were bound to be unsuccessful. He would have been better off with more freedom in school from the beginning.

Brian was the other student whose story taught me something. Now twenty-five, he was at R.P.S. during the years when he could actually play all day instead of attending classes. He was a bright kid and did go to some classes, but not many. He came to us at seven, after a bad beginning in public school, mainly because he was so lively. Now he would be called hyperactive, but in those days he was just considered a bad kid by his public school teacher and by his father, who tried to change his behavior by physical punishment. Although slight in build, he was wiry and aggressive, as well as being smart and manipulative. We all worried about what kind of person he would become as an adult.

When I talked to him, the first thing that surprised me was how important the school had been to him. Although he didn't remember a great deal from those years, he goes back there often. He told me, 'It was a lot of fun—it was great. To go on trips, and see all those places, plus to have the whole park to walk around in. We'd go down to the lake, and go up to see the remnants of the old houses—I still go up there all the time.

'The department of Social Services where I work, every August they have a picnic, and they do it at Rockland Lake, right down the street from the school.

'Last year was my first year, but I brought my bicycle, and I cycled up to the school. It was a lot of fun. I always go back there, see my name on the back of the school, my old phone number. It's still there.

'I remember that we didn't have to go to classes, and for a kid, you know, that's a whole world of freedom. I remember the transition back to public school was really rough. I was like bawling and crying and I didn't want to go to school. I guess having restrictions was hard having to go to class and do all kinds of homework, stuff like that. When you're not used to doing that kind of thing, it can be rough. I think I went back in eighth grade. I did pretty well. When I got to high school I attended most of my classes, but there was a lot of hanging out with your friends, cutting out of class; I still wanted to be free in terms of the restrictions.

'When I got out of high school I went to college but I was pretty well forced, you know, and I didn't want that. So I didn't do so well my first semester and then I stopped. I went to on the job of life training for several semesters and then I went back of my own choosing. Since then I've done well. and maintained at least a 3.3. I had no problems with my math skills and my English skills—in fact I did pretty well in college, I mean with my English skills. I'm pretty proud of myself in that respect. I don't think it's hampered me in any way.

'I tend to get restless still. I play volleyball at home. I've done many things, had many jobs. I don't think I've ever been fired, what I do is I get a job and I like it, and then I just don't like it any more—I get bored and I quit, get a new job. This one—it's the first job I've had full time, I get up in the morning. and I say 'All right, I'm going to work.' And I'm almost excited about it. So I'm very happy in that respect. I run an offset press and a high speed copy machine, and I'm in charge of keeping all the forms, so when they call me, I print them up. I also have that 'Other related duties' clause which can cover anything from fixing a chair to taking someone to the airport. It's a big building—say about 150 people that work in the building I'm pretty lucky. I have a job where I can be anywhere in the building fixing something or whatever and nobody's going to say anything that I can't be there. So sometimes I'll just get up and walk around the building and just talk to people, whether or not I'm actually supposed to be doing it, fixing something. I just do it, and in that respect I really like it. A desk job does not appeal to me.'

I think we gave Brian what he needed. His whole story shows that things work better for him when he makes the choices. He's still a restless, lively person, but he's happy and productively employed. I had been afraid that Brian and Jeff might have been harmed by the freedom we gave them. On the contrary, I now feel we should have given Jeff more, and that Brian only benefited from freedom, however hair raising it was at times for us. If the school is till in existence, I would want to go back to the old days when class attendance was voluntary.

Jeff and Brian are individuals who very clearly didn't fit into the usual school patterns. But this is true to some degree of every student. Each is unique and benefits from freedom of choice and an individualized curriculum. To be part of a democratic learning community teaches skills and confers benefits that last a whole lifetime.

PROFILED SCHOOL:

CHILDREN'S VILLAGE: THE EVOLUTION OF AN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

by Kuniko Kato Principal

When I was younger I spent a year in Norway studying about children's education. I was deeply impressed by the concern for the needs of weak persons in Norwegian society and the practical provisions made by the society for meeting those needs. Each person in the society was considered to be valuable and of great worth in Norway, I found a society in which the government believed in its citizens and was truly concerned about them.

After returning to Japan, I worked for a few years in a kindergarten and nursery school and began to learn more about the government of my own society and as I became more aware of the nature of my government, I was amazed by its contrast with the government and society of Norway. Here I found a government which did not believe in or trust its citizens. Here I found a society which pushes 30 or more children in a class with an exhausted, overworked teacher, often a young teacher who has had no experience in work with children at all. It is a society which thinks children will go wrong unless adults train them by cramming them with facts which adults think are important. It is a society which thinks that children must be kept apart from society in walled prisons and subjected to rigid training in right rules and behavior in order for them to become human beings

As I worked with children every day, I came more and more to a conviction that this approach to children's education is wrong. I discovered that children have a deep natural desire to learn, and they will work hard and long if they are permitted to learn what they want to learn in their own way and at their own pace but in Japan this natural desire of children to learn is stifled and twisted by our formal educational system

These concerns and doubts led me to form a group with a few equally concerned mothers and teachers to discuss such issues as the independence of women and children in Japan, the causes of the increase in the number of 'school refusers,' and other educational concerns. We knew that as women we had not been educated to be persons who believe in our own abilities, persons able to make important life decisions by ourselves. We began to reconsider our educational system and our society. We became aware of the work of A.S. Neill, alternative education associations such as the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools (NCACS) in the United States and the existence of such a country as Denmark where people have the option of starting and controlling their own school with 85% financial support from public school funds, if they can get a given number of families to join together in the undertaking.

Our study and exploration led us to dream of starting a school of our own. This led to our being offered a house in a forest at the edge of our city, and our dream of starting our own school turned into an actuality. Many people helped us with funds, and we started with ten children. We chose the name 'Nonami Kodomo-no Mura' (children's village) for our school.

However, we could not get the sanction of the Ministry of Education because schools such as ours are not recognized as schools by the ministry.

We believed that children should have the opportunity to begin learning in a more free environment as early as possible. Thus, we initially enrolled children from pre-school age through the elementary grades. We found, however that many parents who were eager to enroll their children in our kind of school for their children's early years, became anxious later and decided to take their children out of our school and send them to public school, ignoring the children's desires and hopes. So, we seldom admit younger children now, accepting only older (elementary age) children whose parents make the decision to send their child to 'Nonami Kodomo-no Mura' rather than to a public school. Unfortunately, such people are few. This year we have only eight children, two full-time staff members, and several volunteer staff members.

Two of the children are six years old, two are seven, one is eight, one ten, and two are eleven. The children are divided into three groups, a younger group, a middle group, and an older group. The younger children spend their school day playing with the natural things in their environment doing things with water, for example, making dams, playing restaurant (teachers and staff are the customers, supplying things they need). Individual differences among the older children lead to their working separately. Much of the time a child who wishes to learn about some particular topic or issue is helped to develop a term learning plan and then is assisted in carrying out their plan. Most children carry their learning plans through to a satisfactory conclusion, although the plans are flexible and can be changed expanded, or dropped. We do not give tests or report cards, but we have found that the children become motivated by their intellectual interests and curiosity.

The three groups meet separately each morning to discuss their activities for the day. Periodically, usually once each week, there is a general meeting of all students and staff. During the general meeting, we discuss such matters as daily needs of the school, cleaning, cooking, lunch arrangements, plans for all-school field trips, personal problems, activities which one student wants to do with other students or staff, etc. In the afternoon volunteer staff come to instruct the children in various arts, crafts, and skills such as origami (paper-folding), handicrafts, English, swimming, sports, dance, etc. . Children can choose one craft or skill or they can engage in other activities of their own choosing.

Our 'Nonami Kodomo-no Mura' support group plays a vital role in the life of the school. This group, which includes parents, volunteer staff, and full-time teachers and principal, meets once a month to discuss matters concerning the school, hear reports from committees and research teams, plan fund raising projects, etc.

Nonami Kodo-mo-no Mura is now in its 7th year. We have been able to succeed in accomplishing our dream of making a school which respects and trusts children and in which children are free to learn and grow in har-mony with their nature. As the principal, I am deeply grateful for the devotion and dedication of our staff and supporters which has made this possible and for the help, encouragement, and guidance provided by many alternative school people in the United States and other countries.

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PROFILED SCHOOL:

The Northern Virginia Writing Project
Volume 15 Number 6
NEWSLETTER
July, 1993.

From An Assistant Director's Desk: We're Talking Serious Ownership Here:

by Vic Kryston

On a recent Saturday night my eighteen year old son. Jason, called home, saying that he and some schoolmates, knowing a teacher had been deserted by his fiancée for the weekend, decided to rent some movies and keep him company.

I love my kid and I am certainly in favor of kindness to teachers, but this is a young man who has always hated school. He was apparently a victim of one of those diseases invented by ambitious psychiatric hospitals: the dreaded School Refusal. Wanting to spend a Saturday night with an (ugh) teacher suggests some kind of paradigm shift!

Several years ago, when it became clear to us that public school had little to offer Jason, our ultimate solution became a small, alternative school in Fairfax, The New School, headed by an ex-Fairfax County teacher, John Potter.

I knew John from the days when my older son, Jason's brother, Sean, was able to work through his angst in another school run by John Potter, Somerset, in Washington, D.C. Sean really flowered there. I had similar hopes for Jason.

John Potter's model for his innovative ideas was the famous alternative school in Britain, Summerhill. John established Somerset and later New School based on his sense of what was the best of Summerhill, especially the idea that community building is a basic skill, necessary before very much real learning can occur.

John also sensed that a community, an all inclusive community where each person feels a sense of belonging, is necessarily small in number. The New School which includes K-12 has a population of about sixty students. Total.

But the small number is only a given, not a guarantee of success. The New School has built into its basic structure ways to encourage community building, school meetings where staff and students meet as equals are scheduled weekly. During these meetings the usual issues of school administration, decisions, problems, and discipline are hashed out. Moreover, anyone, staff or student, is encouraged to request a meeting whenever a need is felt. It is not unusual for my son to report that classes were cut short to accommodate a meeting about. . . well in general, about behavior or rules or previously made decisions that might threaten the community. This year, my School Refusing son is chairman of the Fairness Committee; he's the one people turn to when they feel slighted and in need of community support. The 'curing' of Jason's 'School Refusal' has not been immediate. John Potter has what Hemingway said all writers should have: a 'built-in crap detector.'

The school is a loving, people-oriented place to be, but it's not all marshmallows: I have been really impressed by John's acute perception of what makes Jason tick. . . and not tick. In a conference earlier this year, John told Jason that while, yeah, his grades had improved, as had his behavior, John felt that Jason had not yet 'claimed ownership.' Wow! I know about ownership. . . don't I? Isn't that the magic component that turns 'students' into 'real writers?' Haven't we been talking for years about ways to encourage ownership?!

And here's this. . . this headmaster. . . this *administrator*, demanding ownership as a prerequisite for graduation!

The conference went on. . . and on. . . and on: pointing out to Jason times he had and had not claimed ownership, giving him guidance, time and encouragement to begin to discover his own internal, though latent, ownership sense.

I thought of Sean, my other son at the earlier school. How I knew he had burst into his own sense of self when he spoke during a school meeting to which parents had been invited: he spoke, this young rebel, of his discovery that he would only get from school what 'I'm willing to put into it—and I'm putting in a lot!' And the cliché rang with new truth. I'm not sure what delighted me more— his passion or his transformation. I should have recognized then that John Potter is, like Project People, an ownership freak....

Jason, now in his senior year, will have to claim ownership for himself and for his education before he will be deemed ready to graduate. Credits have to accrue, of course, but his final dragon remains to be slain: he must, as must all graduating candidates at The New School, write a paper in which he explores and defends his own reasons why he feels ready to move beyond high school—a reflection of his feelings of whatever ownership he has claimed for his life.

Later, that same Saturday night, Jason called back. He and a few friends had indeed swooped up the lonely teacher, bought some pizza and rented some movies. I asked him where they were going to do all this pizza eating and movie watching and teacher sitting. "At the school, dad. School is the most comfortable place.

Sure it is. Once you own it.

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ARTICLE:

...the teacher always is the prophet of the true God and the usherer in of the true kingdom of God."
—John Dewey,* My Pedagogic Creed *(1897)

ABSOLUTE ABSOLUTION -
The Forgiveness of Original Sin By Ministers of Government Schooling
by John Taylor Gatto

Program, ideology, philosophy, theology—all are frames of meaning differing in the degree of conviction they require from us, the amount of sustained passion we assent to conferring upon them. If a frame of meaning conforms to our inner reality it can sustain itself across millennia as Christianity did; if it does not, it withers away regardless of how much energy its defenders expend in its service—witness the Soviet Union after 85 years or our common-school system after 140.

Frames of meaning. What do we want? What should we seek? When answers to such questions linger long enough they become foundations of a civilization, as the Christian curriculum became a major architectural support of Western civilization. Since about the 4th century A.D., widely shared beliefs in four realms of thought have created a geopolitical entity distinct enough to recognize as 'The West'. Two of its invisible support pillars come out of the North of Europe, two out of the South: these Western ideas are major continuities in our lives, bases upon which we live and act—or react. Without such forges of meaning people tend to go a bit crazy.

About a century and a half ago certain ideological, philosophical, and theological interests set out to revoke the Christian charter of Western civilization. On the basis of Christian political history these groups decided that Christianity was unable to organize society rationally. Put another way, that Christianity was unable to lead the human race out of warfare into a state of permanent peace, out of sectarianism into unity, out of nationhood into a global state, a world government, and out of confusion into the light. These groups, which were not unified in any formal way, still shared the common purpose of eliminating Christianity as a political force, and beginning in the first decades of the 19th century each of the groups, (although for widely differing motives) came to see government compulsion schooling as a vehicle to achieve that end, as well as other desirable ends. The groups I'm talking about included, but weren't limited to, utopian socialists, the embryonic labor movement which regarded churches as allies of management, the decaying associations of guild craftsmen, Deists, Unitarians, Transcendentalists, and Freethinkers, scientific rationalists of the Positivistic stripe, Enlightenment Liberals,* manufacturing and commercial interests, and pragmatic social and economic thinkers.

Much of the great confusion attendant upon understanding the rise of government schooling comes from the fact it was simultaneously sponsored and shepherded by a bewildering array of interests who emerged and disappeared in a cyclical way, exchanging positions of prominence with each other according to accidents of circumstance. Many participants in the effort had a foot in more than one camp, in some cases, such as that of Orestes Brownson, in almost all the camps, and some of the motives for supporting forced schooling went beyond the cancellation of a Christian curriculum, or stopped at some point short of completely cancelling it. But without being aware of the deconstruction of sectarian Christianity being a central goal of institutional schooling, it is impossible to understand the profound disturbance state schooling has wrought in our society by removing two cornerstones of our Western heritage and replacing them with what so far have been inadequate substitutes. Imagine a table missing two of its legs, in whose place are a stack of dishes and a large dog; the table may look the same on its surface but who knows whether it will get you through dinner. Whether the net result of this undertaking has been so far positive or negative will depend, of course, on your own outlook.

The four principal supports of Western civilization are these:

1.) **A unique belief in the sovereign rights of the individual**. These rights are always in balance with the rights of the collective, but the dominant partner is the individual and *not* the collective. This phenomenon occurs in no other civilization as unmistakably as our own.

2) **The scientific vision**. A way of thinking which allows complex wholes to be treated as simple fragments and encourages the breaking of the integrity of nature for the presumed net benefit of human beings.

3) **The need for atonement.** This arises from the allegory of the 'Fall' and from certain specific burdens assigned to mankind upon expulsion from Eden.

4) **A code of moral behavior**. As it was set down in the 10 commands of the Old Testament and the Gospels of the New Testament.

Notice that 1) and 2), although found in various concentrations in the Mediterranean world, were refined and became the dominant characteristic of Northern Europe, and 3)/4) were principally circulated through missions from the Roman church of Southern Europe, although the transfer of this code to North America was performed exclusively by agents of the Northern outlook. Thus the reciprocity of these four ideas surging back and forth across the face of Europe for 15 centuries, and across oceans and continents for the past 4 has fashioned a tough and enduring hybrid form out of which personal meaning can so successfully be fashioned that it dominates the planet.

Now, whether you are Christian or not, a poor Christian or a good one, if you live in a Western land or deal with representatives of the West you must find a way to come to terms with each of the organizing principles I named, including Christianity, because each leads to forms of behavior and valuing. You may reject some or all of this, true, but nonetheless your life and relationships will be profoundly affected by your choices. Every Western institution has been importantly shaped by the Christian curriculum, a shaping now invisible but none the less psychoactive because it cannot be seen.

Before we go on and get into the specifics of the Christian curriculum I want to point out there are other codes of meaning available that don't stem from Christianity, even in the Christian world. For instance each of the first two pillars of Western civilization can be used to generate an entire curriculum from. Rather than acting in concert with Christianity, each, or both in a hybrid form, can be forced to produce an entire code of behavior. The sovereign rights of the individual are a legacy from the great pagan tradition of Europe's Nordic Rim, a gift of the Vikings and warrior chiefs. The code that derives from this is still the code in action in English upper-class boarding schools, a code which numbers among its operating principles: leadership, sportsmanship, courage, team-play, self-sacrifice, devotion to duty, and disdain for hardship. A fuller explication of this code is caught in the scene from *Macbeth* where Duncan denies he possesses the 12 'kingly virtues', and a little research in your dusty Shakespeare will reveal how well this engine of meaning had been formalized by the early 17th century.

Another code of meaning possible to organize one's life about comes most clearly from the great trading civilization of 16th and 17th century, Holland. It is variously known as 'middle-class values' or *petit bourgeois* values, or even in Max Weber's mistaken formulation as 'The Protestant Ethic', but since it antedates the Reformation it is well to keep in mind that it is a fairly radical deviation from traditional Christianity. Its attributes include:

1) Self-discipline
2) Deferred satisfaction
3) Ambition
4) Hard Work
5) Specialization
6) Comfort-seeking
7) Avoidance of conflict, where possible.
8) Materialism

Still another code of meaning can be extracted from the scientific vision which can speak to every decision in life; it generates five major themes of behavior:

1. **A Questioning Attitude**: Nothing remains unexamined or unchallenged. **Respect** is a counter-productive virtue.
2. **Objectivity**: Feelings cloud judgment. Thinking works best when everything is considered a lifeless object.
3. Neutrality: Make no lasting commitments. Loyalty is the end of flexibility/maximum advantage.
4. Instrumentalism: Knowledge is Power
5. The Scientizing of Society: Surface behavior is all that has any meaning. The measurement, prediction, and control of behavior, security, and freedom from want is the end meaning of human life.

Each of the three curricula I've given you—none of them Christian in origin—are intertwined in every aspect of our world, as they must have been at every period in Western history. Christians behave in some of these ways and honor some of these things, but they do not, with a few exceptions, overlap the Christian code. I'm deliberately withholding what I think that is for a while until the terms of this investigation are clear: we are not exploring religion but principles of behavior and meaning—attitudes and values are the game we stalk, not God.

Somewhere at the beginning of the 20th century schools set out to recover the lost Eden of Christianity by reversing certain penalties inflicted after the Fall which are set down in the Book of Genesis. If we're going to get anywhere together I need you to think of my expression 'lost Eden' not as a romantic metaphor, but a real possibility. For you to see it this way doesn't require donning a religious habit, but merely examining the state of Eden as described in Genesis before the Fall. Nothing I'm about to say can't be verified from the Gideon Bible in any motel drawer. Eden looked like this:

1) It had a beautiful Nature, completely tamed.
2) The idea of right and wrong didn't exist there.
3) There was no work to do.
4) Food was abundant.
5) There was no shame in Eden.
6) There were no great passions in Eden.
7) There was no fear of Death in Eden.

Those are Eden's seven framing timbers if it could be rebuilt.

I hope you can see that when anatomized in this rational, matter-of-fact way, that there is a real intellectual temptation to believe that Eden *could* be rebuilt. It doesn't even require faith in the existence of God to imagine a completely tame Nature, plenty of food, no shame, no work, ignorance of right and wrong...indeed I've just described New York City for you. The fear of Death is a little stickler but certainly it's not a very long reach to believe that Death could be whipped—given the right investment in research Science, hospitals, doctors, medicines, public hygiene, etc., etc., and on the way to that point the progress of old age can be retarded by cosmetics, diets, creams, unguents, potions, masks, surgery; whatever it takes.

Great passions also seem well on the way to becoming tamed. In a welfare society without substantial mystery or danger, the only passions which appear to survive are the excitement of violence and the excitement of fornication, which may be the same thing. No student of television or film, popular music or journalism can be unaware that the vital core of these media is violence and fornication in one or another disguised state, nor that the constant presentation of dramatic representations of these things makes the reality less and less able to arouse. I remember an exercise I used to perform with school classes early in my career before I realized I had no right to do it. I would ask kids to tell me about the most horrible physical accident they had ever witnessed: car crashes, bus accidents, people falling out of windows, heart attacks, street murders, (at least half my Harlem kids had seen one or more of these); then I would ask the kids to tell the class how they felt. Invariably the students, always teenagers, would say it made them feel horrible, etc., etc. At that point I would challenge the speaker openly, saying that since the kid had seen much worse on television and in the movies he was just faking the feeling. I said I guessed most people felt nothing at all apart from curiosity.

At that point some incredible dam would burst and 'truth' would pour forth: hands wildly waving, children would deliver incredible confession after incredible confession of having witnessed ghastly things with not the slightest trace of feeling.

'But where did you learn to fake it?' I would ask.

'From television!' 'From movies!' 'My mother told me what to say I felt!'

So you'll forgive me for saying that Eden, as described in Genesis, doesn't seem to be very far-fetched for the architects of schooling, and if it could be achieved without picking up the burden God assigned after the Fall (which I still haven't gotten to) the house of Western identity might really be able to stand on just two of its four legs. After all, if Eden was the prize of Christianity and Eden was within the reach of Science and Sociology, the Science of Humanity, who needed the mumbo-jumbo to get there?

Indeed, there was no religion at all in Eden; its occupants were able to speak directly to God. No religion, so anyone attempting to renew the notion of Eden was justified in eliminating or sharply modifying the commands of God allegedly preserved in literary form by the sects of the Christian religion. The easiest way to do this was not by rejecting what had passed as God's advice for centuries, but in reducing it from theology to philosophy, a less compelling frame of meaning, and then by rational discussion to show that elsewhere on the planet, or in other parts of our own society, people held contrary philosophies. That these were just 'opinions', one almost as good as another. Many technical ways to introduce this relativistic strain into curricula were tried from the advent of factory schooling onwards, the most recent, perhaps, being curriculum games of 'situational' ethics where even murder or abandonment of one's parents becomes the 'right' behavior. Variously named 'global' curricula or 'rainbow' curricula are, operationally, the same thing.*

It's time now to look at the Christian curriculum** as it comes to us from Moses and Christ, or rather I should say the 'first—Christian curriculum because there are two, both equally important in framing the meaning of Western civilization.

The First Christian Curriculum:

1) Respect the Mysteries; know your place.
2) Respect your parents and ancestors.
3) Don't kill your fellow man
4) Don't steal.
5) Don't lie or bear false witness.
6) Don't envy others.
7) Bear witness to the good things.
8) Love, care for, and help others.

Near the end of the 19th century a group of scientific moralists, backed up by industrial wealth, an upperclass pagan outlook, and great political sophistication came to believe that they could synthetically impose a new ethical code, an 'ethical culture', on humanity by restoring Eden. They would do this by wiping away Original Sin, then subordinating the curriculum of Christianity (which had a modest value as a philosophy if the theological base could be extinguished) to the curriculum of Science. On the upper levels of society the curriculum of classical paganism as written down by the Stoic Marcus Aurelius, would become the guiding code of the ruling aristocracy in place of the curriculum of Science which lacked the power to inspire great leadership.

2.

My Scottish Presbyterian wife Janet, is fond of reminding me that only the Pope's gang believes that sins can be taken away. She ignores the many groups that came to be called 'liberal' Christians, including the Unitarians, who aren't really Christians at all. Nevertheless, in the strictest theological sense she's almost right. Calvin is pretty clear on the matter—there is no such thing as Sin and Redemption; to Calvin the idea of Right and Wrong is a heresy, since both the Elect and the Damned are preassigned to Heaven or Hell quite independent of their behavior. We're so unused to thinking this way any more that it might be best to regard Puritan Reformation Christianity as a kind of a caste system, from which there was no escape.

Sin was permanent and indelible and you were born with it; no descendant of Adam and Eve could escape the penalties while alive, or the ultimate penalty of damnation after death without God's Grace. And there wasn't any way to earn that Grace.

Liberal Christianity aside, the main line of descent from Calvin through Cambridge University, the laboratory of Puritanism, to Massachusetts Bay was a belief that civil society had to be set up in such a way as to take into account the sad fact most of its citizens were doomed.

This idea was turned into habits of child-rearing, so that long after the theology that spawned them was seemingly extinct, the notion was communicated behaviorally. It was also embedded into institutional protections for the Elect from the hordes of the Damned, in court procedures and legislative habits and in literally hundreds of other invisible ways. You do not need to believe as the Puritans believed to live and feel and think as the Puritans thought; you don't even have to know who the Puritans *were* to be their faithful disciple. The entire profession of psychoanalysis and counseling is a translation of Puritan obsessions into modern Enlightenment costume; prying into secrets is the main line of defense for a Puritan world-view.

The very complex beginnings of the common school movement in early 19th century New York and in Massachusetts were both a recognition that something would have to be done to contain the Damned in the New World, and—at one and the same time—*a radical rejection of the idea that anyone was damned*—or even that any of the rules of traditional religion applied in the New World. It is this bonding of the wildest contradictions that has made the American school puzzle so hard to solve. The Calvinist part of American schooling is up on the surface and very easy to trace, but the part in service to what Allan Bloom has called "the new American religion" has not to my knowledge ever been brought into the light for close inspection. We all *know*, for example, of the critical involvement of Unitarians in the creation of compulsion schooling; what we don't know is "Why?"; in service to what precise dream of the future?

We are faced with the paradox of a powerful, repressive Calvinist strain built into the machinery of schooling, and at the same time, of a powerful anti-Calvinist strain built into the mechanism too; like the little mill that grinds salt, both little religious mills continue to grind furiously inside the school institution as it prepares to enter the 21st century. The future the totalitarian part would make for us is extremely easy to envision, and in fact has happened a number of times in this century; the anti-religious part, however, is also busy at work creating a future that Christians and non-Christians alike seem to turn from in revulsion. Why that is so is wrapped up in the cancellation of traditional Christian meaning, I think, without being able to supply an adequate substitute. But you will make your own mind up when you have more information in hand.

3.

Somewhere around 1905 our schools were charged for the first time with the challenge of forgiving Original Sin. Obviously no directive said that literally, but school procedures and personnel, places and curriculum, began to be shaped to guide the new institution in that direction. To see what I mean, the time has come to discuss what Original Sin's legacy was to Western civilization. For eating from the Tree of Knowledge (of Good and Evil) Adam and Eve were sentenced to pass to their descendants:

1) **A knowledge of Good and Evil**. Every behavior would offer a free will choice of one or the other, every action would have to be evaluated. What a headache this constant judgment would be!
2) **Labor.** Now people would have to labor for their bread, to become productive beings instead of God's guests. What a backache work would be!
3) **An emotional nature.** Human beings would be subjected to desires from which would come pain and suffering. Without self-control passions would bring continual heartache!
4) **Death.** Men and women would return to dust when life was done and everyday would bring them one step closer.

It's not hard to see, of course, that each of these obligations, willingly shouldered, are the making of a good, strong, productive, and quite wonderful life; but it's equally easy to see that every one also poses a strong temptation to whine, lament and cheat destiny. The Christian vision, naturally, would be that to cheat God out of His punishment would in the end lead nowhere because Death, itself, could not be cheated or long delayed.

The orthodox Christian view before the Reformation was that human nature is good and equal to the burdens. That through cheerful acceptance of them a human creature, however weak, could win Redemption from Original Sin. It was a spectacular motivation for private action, and since Heaven was the same for the poor as for the rich, it is easy to see the psychological strength such a contract bestows on its covenanters. Human nature through hard work is perfectible, the doctrine of sin and redemption carries within it the seeds of a self-activating curriculum which, even for non-believers influenced by it, gives meaning and direction to life. The religious aspect aside, this is a basic, matter-of-fact set of practical guidelines, street lamps for the village of your life.

There are other 'lighting' systems as I pointed out earlier, but none with a record of staying power like this one.

4.

So nobody had to wander aimlessly in the Christian world, what constituted a meaningful life was clearly spelled out. Self-knowledge, duty, responsibility, preparation for death—all these were up to you; no teacher or guru could do the work for you. People being people, however, each of the themes had inherent in it its own heresy, some way to beat the game.

For instance, developing your rational mind suggested ways to cut through God's secrets, the secrets of Nature, and avoid the penalties of Evil. The great deep magical tradition of pagan Europe from which the scientific tradition was born—that attitude that you can get something for nothing by cleverness—peeks forth tantalizingly from the 'Wisdom of Solomon' in the *Apocrypha*:

> He it was who gave me true understanding of things as they are: a knowledge of the structure of the world and the operation of the elements; the beginning and end or epochs and their middle course; the alternating solstices and changing seasons, the cycles of the years and the constellations; the nature of living creatures and behavior or wild beasts; the violent force of winds and human thought; the varieties of plants and the virtues of roots. I learned it all, hidden or manifest.
>
> Wisdom of Solomon 15-21
> *Apocrypha* (Revised English Bible)

By understanding Nature you might devise machines to extract her bounty *without Labor,* and by understanding human nature and power you might turn human beings into slave-machines to do your own labor for you.

By understanding the ways of other, more physical cultures, you might learn to surrender to the temptations of sensual indulgence and escape unscathed, drink every cup to the dregs, exploit every sexual opportunity, exhaust every urge to violence and license—and still find spiritual justifications for your conduct through the doctrine of the 'justified sinner', just as the Ranter sect did. Or you might devise a multi-tiered morality as the Egyptians had, where the highest ranks in secret could indulge themselves while preaching abstinence to the masses. Sort of like smoking dope but claiming if you were caught that you didn't inhale.

And you could even cheat Death for a while, as John D. Rockefeller spent so much effort .and money trying to do. Consider that a significant portion of the entire modern scientific establishment is bent to the task of postponing the inevitable—and removing its inevitability. Indeed, of each of the other three competitive curriculums that grew up with Christianity in the West (see earlier) only the scientific curriculum is in violent conflict with each base of Christian curriculum. The two cannot live together as equals; unless Christianity dominates, it will die in the presence of Science.

Now all this might be only a matter of dusty academic interest except for the uncomfortable truth that these pillars of meaning hold up the house of the Western world. To the extent that school violates one or another, our purpose in living is jeopardized.

Without taking any sides on the moral question which is right or wrong, and focusing entirely on the psychological question whether a sane and stable life can come from the religion or science, we need to take a closer look at the destination the competing God of science is indicating when it contradicts the Christian curriculum.

Of necessity I have to oversimplify here in order to get a handle on very slippery concepts at all. Hopefully each reader will realize I make no promise of the whole truth in what follows, only a start along a promising trail hitherto obscured in underbrush.

Here is the net result of my own reflection, set down starkly. The scientific curriculum has as its poles:

1. You can't know too much, There is no good or evil. Knowledge can give you the same magical power that God has. Did He destroy Sodom and Gomorrah with fire? Then we can turn the

night sky over the Sinai to flame as well with our war machinery. We are God.

2. Work is a curse to be avoided. Do as little as you can get away with. Quality is subjective, it is more important that the customer (teacher) be pleased than that quality be achieved. The package is more important than the product, the sales pitch more important than either. Only stupid people work; machines and slaves are there for those who understand.

3. Good *feeling* is what life is all about; there is nothing besides our sense data. Take as much as you can of it, as often as you can. Check out everything; leave no stone unturned in your search for sensual pleasure. There is no good or bad but thinking makes it so. Grab for gusto, you only go around once.

4. Death and sickness is the ultimate evil. Use as much magic, pills, potions, lotions, surgery, aerobics, etc. as you can to stave off death. Young is the name of the game when it's all said and done, power its only substitute. Take vitamins, listen to doctors, think about your health, issue a blank check to the magical industry dedicated to erasing this scourge of God from human affairs.

None of these prescriptions: knowledge, the easy life, fun, fame, accumulations; can provide much meaning to existence; each is a very limited benefit and more easily attained than we acknowledge. Serious literature, from Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* to Fellini's *Dolce Vita*, is virtually a unanimous pronouncement that the material game isn't worth the candle; fairy tales from King Midas across the whole corpus of Grimm and Anderson delve frequently into what is really important and what isn't. And yet this trivia is the curriculum of modern schooling. Somewhere it was decided to absolve the young of Original Sin, this would be the absolute absolution: freed from its penalties, a new scientific utopia might eventually result after a different set of operating principles was inscribed on the blank tablets of childish minds. It seemed impossible that this effort, surreptitiously made on the part of Unitarians, Quakers, Anglicans, Positivists, and others, and defiantly attempted on the part of Utopian socialists, progressives, and members of the many odd little sects (and some not so little) which flourished in the 19th century, could not improve on Christian superstition. Well, that's hubris for you.

It has never been the method of the West to operate for very long on the basis of faith; what doesn't work in a psychological sense is eventually discarded, even though a grim price may have been paid for a trial period. What I've been calling the Christian curriculum had been around in a recognizable form for about 15 centuries when scientific schooling, beginning in earnest about 1900 after a 50-year warm-up period, decided to chuck it out.

The disestablishment of Christianity was undertaken in stages, the most gentle of which was the one-room schoolhouse period when the *Bible* was presented in every classroom de-spiritualized—as a great work of philosophy and good advice, with Jesus making a regular appearance as a nice man and a purveyor of good advice.

The pattern of the West comes from these assumptions: that there is such a thing as Truth which applies at all times. We believe that no person or group has the whole truth, however, so there is no final human authority. For this reason we scorn both credentialed experts and nihilists and whiners. We think that every person, rich or poor, has some aspect of the truth from the angle of his own background, and so each person has something to contribute. We believe that truth unfolds in time by a cooperative process of discussion that creates a temporary consensus; we hope to approach truth this way by successive stages.

Given all this you can catch some glimmering of the radical nature of State confinement schooling, which presents a world of supposed expert specialists who impose some abstract orthodoxy from the top down. The institution is a contradiction of all that has gone before—as the well-respected American historian Bernard Bailyn said in his provocative essay, 'Education in the Forming of American Society' (1960).

Late 19th century education did not grow from known 17th century seeds; it was a new and unexpected genus whose ultimate character could not have been predicted and whose emergence troubled well-disposed, high-minded people.

All of the conventional, historically developmental essays you may have read about the growth of our schools are fairy tales; they are a forced growth, very recent in origin, whose bizarre and complicated mission hides behind matter-of-fact publicity handouts about reading, writing, and arithmetic. One of the arms of that mission is to restore Eden by cancelling the Christian curriculum.

School is only one of the agencies of a profound philosophical vision which seem aimed at producing an Eden-like utopian future. It might be worth mentioning a few others to break the hypnotic state most of us enter when we hear the word "school". I want to confess I don't see it as a self-contained institution at all but part of something much larger which includes the economy, our social relationships, our connections to ourselves and our families, our contract with the sovereign government, with nature, and with many other things, too.

In this larger engine of which school is a part, we want to keep in mind a centrally managed economy which has managed to divert the bulk of its labor into jobs that don't need doing, so by now almost everyone has caught onto the fact it doesn't matter very much whether we do our work well or not. Keep in mind that we have allowed, since 1914, a group of private bankers to determine the value of our currency, whether business enterprise expands or contracts, and that these private indivi-duals, who are mostly unknown to the public, have been given the magical power to create money or destroy it as they see fit. Thus the responsibility of managing has been removed from our shoulders. Keep in mind the content of our commercial entertainment industry, the unparalleled destructive power of the legal tobacco industry, and many, many other anomalies of 20th century life and you will see that each of these things constitutes, in one of its aspects, hard evidence that Eden is possible to regain. Just abandon notions of right and wrong, treat work lightly, surrender to passion, keep out of the way of old age and death—and you have it. A new Adam. A new Eve.

It is difficult for all of us, believers and non-believers alike, to untangle the spiritual tradition of the West from its religious/political tradition which has produced countless occurrences of intolerance, bigotry, persecution, and other disfigurations. Yet we're going to have to make a stab at it if you're to see that personal and congregational Christianity has had, and still retains, tremendous vitality and power because it addresses an important aspect of our humanity left otherwise untended in a secular age. It is quite possible to stand in awe of the quiet strength conferred by personal Christianity at the same time you feel some horror at the institutional vehicle which conveys it. In any case, I'd urge you to separate the two things in order to understand the mistake 19th and especially 20th century social engineers made when they set out to extinguish the Christian curriculum. What they gained in political power they lost many times over. They sowed a psychological epidemic of meaninglessness which, from where I sit, looks to be well out of

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control.

Unlike political Christianity, personal Christianity at its heart has always been tentative and flexible about interpreting the word of God; this style compels active participation from the believer in the completion of meaning, not mindless acolytes. At its maximum power this kind of personal Quest creates Bartleby the Scrivener, humble people with the strong will of Kings. Thomas Aquinas talks about this tentative quality in *Summa Theologiae*:

> Revelation is not oracular....Propositions do not descend on us from heaven ready made, but are more a draft of work in progress than a final and completed document, for faith itself, though rooted in immutable truth, is not crowning knowledge, and its elaboration in teaching, namely, theology, is still more bound up with discourses progressively manifesting fresh truths or fresh aspects of the truth to the mind. So the individual Christian grow(s)...in understanding; indeed, they must if, like other living organisms, they are to survive by adaptation to a changing environment of history, ideas, and social pressures.

Aquinas said that in 1260 at a time when his voice was almost decisive in church affairs; his high order intellect makes him authoritative in the affairs of the Roman church even today. Observations like this one help us to see that the black eye Western church politics gave the religious life is a long way from the whole of the story.

6.

The trust that Aquinas was willing to extend human nature was withdrawn by the radically different psychological outlook of the 16th century Reformation. Suddenly the world became an evil place and the mortal side of Man evil with it. This critical transformation entered Europe much earlier from Persia and Zoroastrianism in the 7th century B.C., arriving in the western mind from Persian influence on the Hebrews during their Babylonian captivity. It came from another direction, too, that of the Greek rationalists which surrounded and deeply influenced early Christian thinkers.

This at one time heretical view that the world was evil remained peripheral for centuries, but thanks to its development in Augustine's *City of God*, one of the immortal books of the West written in the late 4th century, the God of Forgiveness came slowly to be supplanted by the angry God of the Puritans. *City of God* is the first major landmark of the Puritan point of view, one in which God is seen as Saviour not for everyone but only for an exclusive few.

It was the attempt to restore the loving God to center stage, or failing that to wash one's hands of the whole God business, which ended up in a titanic, yet invisible struggle in the 18th century colonies and early Republic between American Puritans and their own descendants. Between the end of the Revolution and the Jackson Presidency in 1832 Calvinists of the Congregational religion battled the forces of so called 'liberal' Christianity concentrated in the Unitarian sect and its allies, in politics as well as pulpits. Just after the turn of the 19th century, two impressive victories in Boston—where Harvard management fell to Unitarian control—and New York City—where a Quaker private corporation calling itself the Public School Society was given exclusive access to tax money—signaled the eventual outcome of the contest. Although it would not be until mid-century that public school legislation would be passed in both places, from this time forward the momentum ran against Calvinism.

But something strange and perhaps unexpected happened as a byproduct of this changeover. In struggling against the vengeful God it was necessary to mount so many compelling arguments against the established religion that inevitably some of this violent energy was directed against every position held by that religion. Christ the Redeemer was reinterpreted and de-spiritualized. Now he was presented as a model of character but without divinity, or sometimes as a divinity accessible to everyone who sought after it. This 'men as gods' position was especially popular among the intellectual classes.

This transformation robbed the Christian curriculum of its power, reducing it from a grave obligation to a set of good ideas that had to compete against other sets of good ideas. Eventually toward the end of the century the Christian curriculum of duty, service, hard work, cheerful resignation, independence, etc. showed serious erosion and the scientific management in schools of the 20th century removed it entirely.

The dimensions of the tragedy this uncovered have only been slowly revealed as the 20th century wore on, but they remained unnoticed by the enthusiastic progressive forces who pulled it off. The angry God was not only gone but the idea of God along with Him.

7.

When Reformation Christianity came to see man as evil where once he had been good, albeit weak; when Evil came to be seen as a tangible commodity with Satan as its distributor, there was no recourse but to build within the institutions of society protection against beings who could not be trusted. Prisons, workhouses, police, insane asylums, hospitals and schools lay in embryo along with that radical Persian notion of human nature.

If human beings were evil they had to be watched all the time—controlled, confined and punished. If you were 'liberal' these things had to be done for other people's own good, and evil was perhaps seen as sickness which required 'treatment'. But in the end, among those who held the Reformation view of human nature, whether Calvinist or Unitarian, Presbyterian or Quaker, the net result looked pretty much the same—the road to an institutional future was open wide.

On the secular side, Thomas Hobbes came down this same road in 1651 with *Leviathan*, his justification for a total State under the hand of a centralized elite, a State reaching into every nook and cranny of personal and family life. In the very conception were the 20th century schools which eventually resulted. The only missing piece in the confinement strategy was a proper psychological theory to offer an explanation why such a scheme would work—human experience with confinement by intimidation held out no reliable promise of conversion to the master's way of thinking among the confined. In regard to the imaginative conception of forced mass schooling, would parents be content to have their children live this way? Would the kids stand for it?

Both answer and theory were supplied toward the end of the 17th century by Hobbes, and especially by the aristocrat John Locke. Children, said Locke, did not arrive into life with any coding at all, either good or evil. Innate ideas, as the habit of the day termed it, do not exist. Children were erasable tablets and could be written upon by anyone who had charge of their experience.

In the shadow of the French Revolution Helvetius dusted the same idea off and displayed it for the *philosophes*. Of course it was a spectacularly wrong idea, as every mother's common observation certainly told her, and from a scientific perspective, babies arrive with a full encyclopedia of genetic signals numbering in the hundreds of thousands—every one of them 'innate'. But wrong or not, this was such a useful idea, politically, that it proved irresistible.

In one of the great ironies of history, although Locke's ideas about individual liberty became a major causal factor in two great political revolutions aimed at freeing the human spirit, his psychological theory of the blank tablet child became the foundation for an exquisite and unprecedented tyranny of forced schooling two centuries later.

With a psychological theory of schooling in hand, it's time to return to the theological realm, where developments were occurring from the Reformation onward to set the stage for the great religious battles of the 19th century in the United States which ended in the creation of a new civic religion of government schooling which promised to restore the pre-Christian Eden.

Remember that if before the Reformation you could be saved by your own hard work, courage, self-control, and morality, then after it you could not—the only salvation lay in receiving the gift of mysterious Grace from God, which happened to only a fortunate few. Then, in what surely must be one of the most audacious conceptions in the whole history of mentality, the Reformation Christian was asked to accept that even the finest men and women *were just as evil as the worst!*

This is the basis for the most radical pedagogy—so roll that around in your mind long enough to see a part of its significance! Good people were evil too, according to the established religion of New England and points west; they differed from the Damned only in that they were 'justified sinners', a category which meant they could not be kept from heaven by child molestation, mass murder, or bad cooking! If you can grasp even a little of the implications of such a notion you will see it means that nobody can be trusted, that everybody needs to be watched and spied upon, his behavior tabulated and filed. It means that families especially, with all their possibilities of promiscuous privacy, have to be reined in. All this stuff led to some of the phenomenal complications in human relationships characteristic of the modern world.

I hope you're still hanging on—because the main reason to write this down is to help you see that things you might believe belong in church, or are only dusty history, are alive and well and living in the bricks and mortar of your school and every other institution of modern life. We've just been stripped of the habit, and the familiar grammar and lexicon we need to talk about these things easily. Orwell saw that in *1984*, when he considered the effects of disconnecting the human imagination from speculative concepts like 'love' and 'revolution' by a deliberate government sanitizing of language through schooling.

8.

The dilemma of Governor Bradford, John Cotton, the Mathers, and the rest of the distinguished company of Puritans who founded the Massachusetts colony was what shape a system of governance should take in light of the fact that:

1) The Arbella and the Puritan fleet which followed her in the next 11 years was loaded with wicked men and women.

2) Paradoxically, some of these wicked people were guaranteed Salvation whatever bad acts they committed, and others were doomed no matter how many good acts they did.

3) That family life had to take into account the certainty that some of its members were among the Damned even though they sat at the same table.

4) That the totality of the Poor were unmistakably damned because poverty was a sure sign of God's displeasure. Yet the cheap labor poor people represented was essential to prosperity.

It was a lively time all right, full of strange energy. Try to imagine the institutions you would invent to protect yourself against the doomed in such a world, the minute you do you begin to run right smack into some very familiar furnishings of our own time.

Certainly you would want a lot of police and magistrates around; certainly weapons and you would be good friends, certainly you would want ways to keep a watch on strangers and their children.

Before long you might begin looking for ways to spy on your neighbors behind their closed doors; it might occur to you that the way children behaved was an indication of what the home was teaching. Perhaps you could arrange to get all the children together in a large shed and under the pretext of having them read and do sums you could watch them? How about sending 'work' into their homes whose completion would be a measure of the mother's trustworthiness and diligence?

The best safety would lie in keeping everyone busy all the time until they were too worn out to cause mischief or even think about it. Beginning in childhood with exercises where every 40 minutes or so on a signal like a bell everyone gets up and changes tasks and places. The Devil finds work for idle hands. In a society filled with evil families and evil individuals, compulsion schooling of a particular character would surely be among the strategies hit upon.

Rewards and punishments would be the behavior shaper. Calvin had warned in 1535 that the Damned were so numerous no police system could contain them unless they were taught to police each other. Competition leading to rewards and punishments would be the management tool. The real tricks of behaviorist psychology were under-stood thoroughly hundreds of years before Watson and Skinner wrote them down. If the lost could be set against each other their Satanic potential could be neutralized.

I trust this description makes you squirm uncomfortably in your chair. To me it is particularly reminiscent of Andrew Carnegie's 1889 plan to set up a system of formal schooling where common men, like salmon swimming upstream, are met by school waterfall after school waterfall at which they will expend revolutionary energies in something called 'lifelong learning'.

Thinking about this problem of controlling bad people was a constant throughout the Puritan period and it continued to be a powerful obsession long after the day dramatic religious imagery to describe it was abandoned; far into the time when the concepts of theology were translated into the concepts of modern psychology, a close inspection showed that only superficial nomenclature and methodology had changed. All contemporary psychology, whether laboratory or clinical, is a direct outgrowth of an intense study of the Damned and a view of human nature that requires micro management of their attitudes and behavior.

From advice to the Prince in 1519 to William James' pragmatism, Sigmund Freud's neuroses and the leading concepts of the 'human potential' movement and its leadership, psychological systems have always been the way intellectuals sell their insights about human nature to the sovereign power, whatever that may be. The control of the Damned is always the motivation, a control which does not preclude treating them well and leading them back to Eden.

9.

When New England's orthodox leadership surrendered control after 180 years of political supremacy, the surrender was at first only partial. From the beginning of the 19th century until its middle leadership was shared between the onrushing

Unitarian power and its ancestral Congregational form. During the transition period an important legacy was transferred from fathers to sons: the great problem, 'What is to be done with the Damned?'

The most immediate cause of the changeover was the successful overthrow of England in the Revolution, an effort that required young men's energy and young men's ideas to bring about; in the de-institutionalization of one old order—the Anglican—another—the Congregationalist—was brought about, too. The flowering of New England was a young, optimistic man's game; to them nobody was damned: that was a conceit of troubled minds. If England could be beaten, the Indians driven out, and the fields, forests, and waters made to yield unprecedented wealth, then anything was possible.

It is impossible to read many of the writings of the New England hierarchy of Unitarianism without being impressed by a fantastic smugness of spirit, a fatuous self-congratulatory element which occurs even in Thoreau. Religiously its embodiment had been caught best in the enthusiastic excesses of a sect called 'The Ranters,' who had solutions to every problem—and believed they could do no wrong. The Ranters had been absorbed into Quakerism and from these, at least symbolically, the mold of progressivism was struck.

Enthusiastic men and women set out to reverse what they considered to be the error of their parents: religious superstition. And yet these were not fools; that the poor were all over the place was undeniable.

One of the new answers that emerged from liberal Christianity was scientific prisons, another, mental hospitals, still others, orphan asylums, workhouses, police forces and schools. The record of the first years of government schooling until about 1890 can be largely counted as an answer to the old Calvinist question about the Damned; the record of schools since then a great Quest for a new Atlantis inherent in the founding myths of traditional Christianity itself, the lost Eden.

The deconstruction of Reformation religious outlook left the puzzle of human nature and the puzzle of where God was located, in churches or the human heart?—or nowhere—to be wrestled with anew. Primitive Christianity had put Him inside each person, the Catholic Church had moved him into parish and cathedral, the Reformation into congregations; now in the aftermath of 300 years of passionate conflict the descendants of Puritanism, following the lead of Kant, Fichte and Hegel in Germany were moving him into the State itself. The State, said

Hegel, is God. And Hegel's voice came to be heard in every American school as the 19th century came to its end, because the leader of the American Hegelian movement was the most influential schoolman the country had ever seen, a national figure, William Torrey Harris.

By 1890 psycho-physical research laboratories in northern Germany, heavily attended by young American scholars from New England, had established that John Locke was almost right, children could be molded significantly. However, rather than being blank tablets, children were complex machines. Their programming, like the programming of any machine, was a matter of original design and correct adjustment. The best designs were, oddly enough, Germanic or Anglo-Saxon, but nothing could be done about that. In the matter of adjustment, however, the mass population could be rendered useful and harmless. The old religious nightmare of Evil and Chaos could finally be put to rest with psychological science. People were morally neutral, just as Locke had contended, but because of their machine nature they had only limited possibilities. A scientific State, lacking sentimentality, could adjust humanity to perfection.

But much had to happen before the machine metaphor got into the driver's seat of schooling. First, the bright young men of Boston and the Quakers of New York had to demonstrate in Lyceums, newspapers, drawing rooms and colleges just how wrong the old 'human nature is evil' way really was, the old 'no salvation through good works' song. Because Christian habits of hard work, morality, self-control and imminent mortality were so deeply ingrained in what seemed to be common-sense thinking as well as religion, the task was far from easy. It required all the genius, patience, sustained enthusiasm, political sophistication, scientific thought and firmness the Unitarian aristocracy could muster to turn the tide and forgive Original Sin.

But these men were determined and cheerfully united in a great cause.* They were up to the challenge.

10.

How would you go about eroding the notion of Good and Evil? Certainly not all at once as a libertine might do, but slowly and gradually. Evil can be renamed 'psychosis' or 'mental disease' and a new employment class of trained counselers and clinicians empowered to treat it with the instruments of 'scientific' procedure, thus empowering another employment class of theoreticians and professors. Evil can be traced to the obsolete hothouse institution of the family instead of to Satan.

The new demonology can be constructed from fathers and mothers, aunts and uncles, instead of from incubi and succubi—thus justifying government and professional action instead of prayer.

German philosophy had begun to target the family as a major danger as far back as the early 18th century; soon psychology would verify that prescient hunch through the work of Freud and the psychoanalytic school. Preventive hygiene involved taking children away from mother, keeping her influence to a minimum; thus was the ancient German hatred* for womanhood scientifically validated and used to justify round-the-clock confinement in schools.

And if Evil was only a superstition to be dismissed along with Satan, then Good had to be brought to heel too, although it required a highly developed sensibility to see why. Good is a relative term: for something to be good other things have to be less good, worse, bad—and eventually on out to evil. You can't have goodness without evil, just as you can't really have God without some form of Satan. If evil people were really just sick, then good people were sick, too. We were all sick, then, and the best way to set up the planet would be as a hospital ward where the least sick cared for the rest of us.

An important step, then, along the road to the Eden school would ultimately regain for us, was its use to eliminate sharp distinctions of right and wrong. No behavior so bad it led to permanent expulsion, no performance so good it entitled its owner to special treatment. Slowly and steadily, decade after decade, the leveling continued until the point was reached where New York City could hire a schools chancellor who boasted in print that he had once sold drugs and a President could nominate as Attorney General a woman who confessed to criminal behavior and tax evasion only to qualify herself for the position.

Just as the Puritans had warned us, we were all evil, but in the return to Eden we were instructed by our schoolmasters that it didn't really matter.

II.

In 1919, a great laudatory history of American education was written which preempted the field of school history for nearly 50 years and made its author rich. Ellwood P.Cubberly's *Public Education in the United States*, written while he was Dean of Teacher Education at Stanford, supplied instant national myths around which all thinking about schools—by legislatures, taxpayers, journalists, parents—was forced to coalesce. Wonderfully illustrated, Cubberly's narrative is the tale of a great national triumph, hardly broken by a dark note as obstacle after obstacle is smashed out of the way by the zeal of Ranters.

The contest is drawn with dramatic skill, between a chain of wise and benevolent pro-school folks extending through the centuries and a chain of narrow-minded, greedy people on a parallel chain. Only once in its 782 pages does this comprehensive history of progress falter in a shift of tone which Cubberly is unable to conceal. The dark shadow passes over the brightly textured pages swiftly so you have to pay careful attention to see it. Listen:

> Since 1900, and due more to the activity of persons *concerned with social legislation* (emphasis mine)... than to educators themselves, there has been a general revision of the compulsory education laws....the school census has been changed so as to aid the location of children of compulsory school age, and special officers have been authorized or ordered to assist school authorities in enforcing the compulsory attendance laws. Having taxed their citizens to provide schools, the States have now required the children to attend and partake of the advantages provided....
>
> *One result of this legislation.* ...These laws have brought into the schools not only the truant and the incorrigible, who under former conditions either left early or were expelled, but also many children...of inferior mental qualities who do not profit by ordinary classroom procedure. Still more, they have brought into the school the crippled, tubercular, deaf, epileptic, and blind, as well as the sick, needy and physically unfit. By steadily raising the age at which children may leave school...our schools have come to contain many children who...demoralize classroom procedure....a compulsory education law cannot create capacity to profit from education...within the past 25 years the whole attitude of the school toward such children has undergone a change, and an attempt, not always successful, has been made to salvage them....over-age children, refractory cases, corporal punishment....defeat the social and citizenship aims of the schools.

Poor Dr. Cubberly. Like so many schoolmen before him, like Horace Mann himself, he had believed himself to be a principal* in the creation of a bright new progressive institution that would bring the benefits of illuminated intelligence to the masses. His feeble protest to the unnamed 'persons concerned with social legislation' in the passage above is surely an index of his sudden awareness of how decorative and ultimately unnecessary his own soft job really is—and how perilous the position of an academic without formidable patrons can be. When I despair of the Cubberly tradition as it is carried forward by contemporary academic 'reform' voices like Gardner's and Finn's, Ravitch's and Sizer's, I sometimes think of this passage from *Public Education in the United States* and forgive them.

We can extract a useful banner motto from Cubberly's whispered complaint, 'The Demoralized Classroom', a classroom which our own era has inherited and demoralized even further. As Cubberly infers, it is not a real problem but an invented one, engineered by people who knew exactly what they were doing. Cubberly's bewilderment need only be our own if we continue to avoid the obvious: that the social agenda of schooling and the social agenda of individuals and families is not the same thing.

Consider what the school agenda might be to sustain it through all these periods of complaint it has suffered: by mixing good kids and bad kids together in a laboratory setting both can learn from each other that they are pretty close to being the same. Of course bad kids beat up good kids and steal from them, but good kids rat on bad kids and humiliate them regularly. Both come to respect the other's power, by long familiarity they come to have contempt for it. A great leveling occurs. This is social engineering on a post-graduate level, worthy of the legends of Solomon, broken loose from the democratic tradition entirely.

We have clear statements of a pressing intellectual need to move to a position beyond good and evil from the mid-19th century onwards which come from all over the European and American world. Nietszche's famous book of that title is only the most naked statement of the idea. Darwin, Galton, and Freud are saying the same thing; the entire matter of Dostoevski's *Crime and Punishment* is an exploration of the psychology of pretenders to Eden; the mystery of what the transcendentalists in Boston were really transcending is here also.

In the early 16th century at the dawn of experimental science, Machiavelli's intuition of a new psychological science is unmistakable; less than a century later the theme has reached Will Shakespeare's ears in Stratford, appearing in the mouth of Prince Hamlet as, 'There's nothing good nor bad but thinking makes it so.'

12.

In 1948 Alger Hiss, first president of the World Health Organization (WHO), redefined what good health means, in a paper he did for the Carnegie Endowment introducing the new association. In the course of this paper which makes much of redefining 'health' as a state of mental and social well-being, not merely freedom from disease, Mr. Hiss refers respectfully to an eminent Canadian psychologist who wrote a 'little gem' in this area, Dr. Brock Chisholm. I'd like to cite a few lines from the little gem itself so we can track together how far the elimination of good and evil progressed from Nietszche to 1946. The following is from the journal *Psychiatry* (February, 1946):

> Is there any force so potent and so pervasive that it can...produce inferiority, guilt and fear in all civilizations? There is—just one. The only lowest common denominator of all civilizations and the only psychological force capable of producing these perversions is morality, the concept of right and wrong....
>
> In the old Hebrew story God warns the first man and woman to have nothing to do with good and evil. It is interesting to note that as long ago as that 'good' is recognized as just as great a menace as 'evil'....
>
> ...artificially imposed inferiority, guilt and fear, commonly known as sin...produces so much of the social maladjustment and unhappiness in the world....
>
> The training of children is making a thousand neurotics for every one that psychiatrists can hope to help with psychotherapy.
>
> The...eradication of the concept of right and wrong which has been the basis of child training, the substitution of rational thinking for faith...these are the...objectives....
>
> ...freedom from morality... free from the outmoded types of loyalty (family, culture, nation)...the magic fears of our ancestors....

I will skip over the obvious logical dilemma Dr. Chisholm has when he argues against the concept of right and wrong by pronouncing it, in essence, 'wrong' to direct your attention to his emphasis on the training of children, which is, in his formulation (and presumably that of the World Health Organization, at least in 1948) to be sharply altered from its traditional position of a developer of intellect into a kind of behavioral laboratory where three concrete prejudices are to be 'eradicated': 1) the concept of right and wrong; 2) faith in God, which is considered a 'magic fear'; 3) family loyalty, which is, to Dr. Chisholm, 'outmoded'. Chisholm might well have plagiarized his text from the writings of the French positivist, Auguste Comte, so closely alike are they in their stances; indeed, his is a curriculum identical to that laid down by the scientific heirs of the French Enlightenment which was designed to produce a new, more cheerful proletariat for the industrial utopia of mid-19th century Europe.

The teachings of Comte, this movement's leader, had a very large influence on the progressive classes at the time of American schooling's inception—and through John Stuart Mill, who subsidized Comte, on the entire social welfare movement in the United States. Comte, too, held himself beyond good and evil, his inner circle functioned as a robed religion worshipping Mankind and Science. At its peak it included the parents of Herbert Croly, eventually editor of *The New Republic* and a man principally responsible for both the platforms of Teddy Roosevelt in 1912 and Franklin Roosevelt in 1932.

Some of the innate strangeness of American institutional life entered the thinking of 23 year old Ken Kesey when he was writing *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest;* it turns up in the speech of Dr. Peavey who runs the regular ward meeting for the cuckoos, where every patient is urged to confess his innermost thoughts and to peach on his fellows—loyalty belongs to the group, not to individuals. Only in this way, maintains Peavey, will a true 'therapeutic community' ever be achieved: in other words, by abandoning privacy, loyalty, trust, etc.

I can remember clearly the last school at which I worked, Booker T. Washington Junior High School in Manhattan. A kind of good-natured dishonesty was the *lingua franca* of hall and classroom. Student thieves, including two kids of mine who robbed a grocery store, were regularly returned to class after a lecture from the Principal. Muggers, sexual predators, and drug/weapon carriers received the same benevolent treatment, usually within a few minutes of apprehension. One nice young fellow who was genuinely affable and philosophical, and who ran a crap game in the back of my room on a regular basis, smoked reefer intermittently, and undressed at least two girls a week against their will, gave me some advice in the most pleasant voice imaginable during my first week at Booker T. 'Save yourself the trouble,' said my young friend, 'he'll just send me back up as soon as I get there.' I thought different but he turned out to be right.

But the atmosphere at Booker T. Washington J.H.S. was quite the reverse of what you might expect from the stories I just told; the tone of the school was as good as the best that could be found in Community School District 3, between Columbia University and Lincoln Center on Manhattan's Upper West Side.

Even the 'criminal element' (to be old-fashioned about it) there was relaxed and jovial rather than uptight and tense; the victims had adapted to their victimization with a fair degree of sportsmanship, and the *modus vivendi* extended into every operation in the building. I once heard a woman in the Teacher's Room call it the 'last Indian treaty', 'you leave us alone and we'll leave you alone.' But it had a more powerful teaching function than that; thousands of silent witnesses to uncivilized behavior were learning how little value being good really had, or how little cost being bad entailed.

The lesson I'd like you to hold in mind for a while from this personal story is not how 'awful' government schools are, though that is certainly true, but just how well the strategy of repealing Original Sin works. It depends on what goal you are working towards. An institutional goal of relative peace and collegiality is better approached by eliminating distinctions than preserving them, even the distinctions between good and bad. This strategy doesn't work at all if intellectual development is your target but in 30 years of teaching in a number of different schools in Manhattan, I never encountered an administration who really cared about learning.

In 1991 the Justice Department estimated that 100,000 students enter school each day armed: that's 10 Army divisions. 900 teachers an hour are threatened, 40 an hour assaulted on school property. In keeping with our customary attitude toward children, the largest fraction of school crimes, students preying on other students, were not tabulated.

The other three planks of the curriculum that derived from Original Sin and the Book of Genesis were much easier to overthrow than a sense of morality because an active pursuit of the scientific outlook—one of the four natural pillars of Western civilization—can be overstressed in order to provide what might be called 'a procedural morality'; by which I mean that the various operations of observation, tabulation, inductive hypothesis, testing, recording, the cult of objectivity, etc., can be elevated to social attention in such a way as to appear to replace conventional morality with a thoroughly good-natured rational outlook.

When this is done, as it has been done in our culture for several centuries, material benefits are produced in such abundance as to raise serious questions about the value of the Christian curriculum. I'll deal with the other three penalties of Original Sin briefly so you can see what I mean:

Work. Until about 1800 work meant one thing for the most part: farm work. In 1700 twenty out of every twenty-one adults did farmwork. Of course farmwork was a great deal more than a way to make a living; it was a total, comprehensive way of life comprising shelter, sustenance, clothing, recreation, medicine, economy, socialization, pedagogy, and anything else you can name. Only one out of every 21 people was left over to make mischief. But over the past three centuries the agricultural and industrial revolutions appeared to solve the economic puzzle of food, clothing and shelter without requiring much work.

And that, of course, was true. But in accepting the solution of *less work*, contrary to the Biblical injunction, a powerful new problem was created that has proven to date without solution. That of course is the psychological, social, and spiritual problem that arises when you have no useful work to do. Phony work, no matter how well paid it is, causes such great distortions to emerge into human consciousness that we may well consider the major efforts of our civilization are now going into solving them—with no solutions in sight.

In any case, the problem of work seemingly solved by plentiful food and machines which only needed tending, another powerful imaginative force came into being to nail 'work' into its coffin once and for all. I'm referring to advertising, the handmaiden of a mass production economy which everywhere reinforces the notion dramatically that hard work is what dim-witted people do. A magical machine exists for every job.

In such a world as this, the real political problem is keeping people *occupied*. Jobs have to be invented by government agencies and corporations—both must employ millions upon millions of people for which they have no real use. And somehow conceal what is happening so 'workers' don't feel too bad and social instability can be avoided. In a society such as we have created, child labor laws are an absolute essential to keep young men and women at their brightest and most energetic moment from massively aggravating the real problem. Setting aside the romantically sentimental arguments about childhood, which in light of condom distribution in schools, the dramatic content of MTV, etc. appear increasingly Alice in Wonderlandish, violation of the work plank of the Christian curriculum has backed us into a corner from which no authority has any idea how to extricate us. The denial of substantial apprenticeship programs through schooling (as is done is Germany and elsewhere) or even the mounting of efficient 'shop' programs is more from the same piece of lumber—we cannot economically afford to let children work, or even *learn* to work, *for fear they may discover the great secret of all human history*, that work is not a curse; that it carries within itself impressive rewards divorced from praise or paychecks, that it is the only reliable key to a strong self-image, self-respect, physical health, independence, self-reliance, and a whole host of other values.

We have come to believe that we cannot turn back, and that any agency which preserves this secret knowledge, as, for instance, the Amish, the Mormons, or the Christian Scientists do, must be marginalized (or taken into the control structure) for fear word will get out and a revolution occur which no army or police force could stop.

Self-control vs. Loss of control. In a world without real work where intellectual development is restricted only to those needed for policy-making positions and a support staff for these, where men are seen as gods and no divine injunction need be obeyed, where is the need to practice self-control? Indeed, what is there to *do* apart from emotional indulgence? In such an environment any phenomenon which can arouse emotional response over and over and over again without satiation can be expected to become the most valued time-killers of all. Dramatic tales that follow fam-iliar satisfying patterns, brief musical narratives, sporting events, visual displays, dramatized acts of violence, sexual acts, etc.

Through these recreations millions of people can live vicariously an emotionally meaningful sequence which they could not earn for themselves through actual social participation in the world. But the vicarious experience lacks staying power unless it can be augmented by some actual emotional thrill, so private lives are riddled with actual opportunities; to fuck, steal, take drugs, drive fast, get drunk, overeat and flashdance in general.

Once again, in thinking about this you should ask yourself, 'given the premises of Eden, what else *is* there to do?'. Children, without having words or concepts to express themselves precisely, are very well tuned to what they need—and are being kept from by forced confinement schooling on our national model—and what the allowable substitutes for this need are. Here we have an impossible dynamic for a classroom teacher to solve.

The last rejection out of the code of penalty Original Sin imposed was the fact of

Death. But the one syllable conceals a world of careful preparation, beginning in youth, for a progressive series of changes brought about by aging—as the body weakens, the spirit should strengthen; as Beauty fades, it takes Vanity with it; as we tend the young, so they must tend us; and so forth. But the fact that we are going to die is absolutely the only thing that gives any action committed or omitted any meaning—for if we lived an Eternity there would always be time to try again.

So recognition of aging as an almost miraculously complicated agency of meaning; as the writer of so many internal dramas the student of this kind of theater could never be bored; as something to be *enjoyed* rather than tolerated or feared; as an utterly essential part of being human at all. To run from this is to run from being at all.

It would take a long book of its own to adequately begin to discuss the flight from death, sickness, and age in our culture or how crucial the role has been that the schools have played in this folly. It would take an equally long book to come to terms with the staggering percentage of our total economy devoted to avoiding death and aging, from the 12% the medical industry consumes to the untold billions spent on cosmetics, potions, oils, vitamins, unguents, ointments, massage artists, plastic surgeons, gymnasiums, coaches, gurus, publications, health technology, psycholog-ical advice, and all the rest of the dreary catalogue. Christopher Lasch estimated that about 22% of all American jobs involve some kind of surveillance upon one's fellow citizens (and I'm not sure whether he included schoolteachers in that total), but certainly the avoidance of death—which would include the sub-industry that hides the old near death so younger people won't have to worry before their time—must rival surveillance as an aspect of both our financial economy and the subtler yet more pervasive social/psychological economy which robs our lives of positive meaning.

13.

I realize I've presented you here with a large thesis which by its nature will not submit to the kind of 'proof' you find in a courtroom or a piece of German scholarship. Yet, each of you has a great deal of experience with the raw material of life, enough, I am confident, to decide how true this theory might be, or how useful in your own plans and thoughts.

I've contended that a human management device was discovered by the descendants of the New England Calvinists, that group we usually refer to as 'progressives', which entailed the systematic unweaving of the world view of traditional Christianity and the discarding of its curriculum of morality, labor, self-control, and courage in the face of death.

All of these things had, at one time, been considered under the control of every individual's free will, but that notion of individuality eventually began to seem a serious impediment to forces that wished to collectivize the American masses. The motives behind this wish are not, I think, what Marxist and other social critics believe them to be (which is to say, material or power/ control motives), though evidence can be turned up to support those cases. I think the aggressive hostility to the religion of Christianity and its curriculum signal what we are really in the presence of—and that is nothing short of a new religion whose ultimate idea of Paradise is not completely clear yet, but which, through our schools and our economy, has left a trail of clues which point in the direction of at least one conclusion.

It has discarded Original Sin and is even now working resolutely to restore the pre-Christian Eden, to which my own response is this:

I prefer not to.

This passionately polemical essay actually constitutes a chapter of John's new book, not yet published. We are grateful to John for allowing us to include it! Oh—I hasten to add, I am using the term polemical is an admiring capacity.

[1] The word 'Liberal' in its 19th century usage has virtually no connection with its late 20th century descendant; perhaps an image of someone 'liberated' from superstitions (church!) and sentimentalities (family!) will serve as a rough guide.

[2] No attempt is made at this point to evaluate the merit of these things for other purposes. I am at pains only to point out that weakening boundary definitions under official sanction in one area ensures that they will be weakened in others, including the moral.

[3] Most of the Christian curriculum comes from the Hebrew Bible and is often referred to as Judeo-Christian, which it is. I've avoided this usage because there are two Christian curricula, one stemming from the acceptance of Original Sin. A large share of the personal motive power in our civilization came from this second source, which Jews do not acknowledge; hence my decision to focus on the Christian aspect.

[4] Meanwhile, over in England, a parallel development to escape the traditions of Christianity was taking place. Throughout the century, under the leadership of Jeremy Bentham, James Mill and John Stuart Mill (whose own education was a test of Helvetius' blank tablet theory) a violent campaign against Christianity was being waged. By century's end a political movement was launched out of Oxford, bankrolled by Cecil Rhodes' diamond and gold wealth, to bring about a reunion between England and America—and a mutual effort toward a world government controlled by English speakers. Here, from a diffent quarter, came a powerful plan to restore the pre-Christian Eden of pagan values preserved in the British landed classes.

[5] This phenomenon, well known to European writers but avoided in the United States, might benefit from a little illustration: the number of women slaughtered in German witchcraft proceedings numbers in the hundreds of thousands, many times more than dies in all other European countries combined; similarly, the appearance of women in the old Norse religion is almost never unambiguous—what delights they bring to men are usually overmatched by mischief.

[6] The great changes in schooling which marked the beginning of the 20th century were arranged by political business leaders alarmed at the sudden rise of Germany as a competitor, the upper-class 'child welfare movement,' and powerful 'old-line' families horrified by the secondary effects of immigration.

Quoted from GROWING WITHOUT SCHOOLING, and repeated from an early issue of ΣΚΟΛΕ, the following tribute to John Holt was dictated to their mother by Danette, Bridget and Socorro Finn, ages seven, six and four. I fall in love with it all over again every time I re-read it—the tears never fail to well up——so I wanted to share it with you one more time. It helps me keep John Holt's memory green and vivid:

John was a good friend. He seemed like family to me. I played with him and I talked with him. John writed books, and him played on the cello. He played a violin too. He showed how to play our violin. He played "Guess the song" with us. We guessed "Twinkle Little Star." John made a magazine. A lot of people made a magazine. John was the boss. It was him's idea. He worked too. We carried things and stapled. We took packages to the post office with Steve and him gave us a kiss. We copied papers on the copier. I stapled my finger once. I put postage on packages and I weighed them. John typed on his typewriter. Sometimes he fell asleep on his typewriter. When he typed he put on his earphones and he didn't close the door. He talked on the telephone. Then he closed the door. We had a typewriter too and we typed. But our typing wasn't a magazine or a book. Sometimes it was a letter. Sometime I'm going to make a book. John said I could make a book.

I liked to be with him. He was our John Holt. He came to our house. He slept in Danette's room. Once Corrie stuck a penny to his head with spit. It stuck 'cause he was sort of bald. She was really little. He said she was learning. He didn't yell. Him never got mad at us. We watched the gymnastics on TV together. I told him I plan to be in the Olympics. He said he'd come and cheer for me. He was going to come and visit us. I was going to show him my cartwheel. We were going to play the violin together. I was going to show him my new room. But he died. He got cancer. Him was too sick. He took his body off. He went off to heaven.

I want John! John! John! John! John is my best friend. He has to take care of Anna. Anna got in an accident and got dead too. Her went with John. I don't like my friends dying. John was good at hugging. Nobody else likes to eat peanut butter and applesauce sandwiches with me. John liked to talk too and he never called me motor-mouth. John was a grown-up and a person. I miss John. He's still my best friend. You can love a person even if he has to take his body off and go off to heaven.

HAIL TO THE VICTORS: HOME EDUCATORS OF MICHIGAN

by Pat Montgomery

Seven years have gone by since Clonlara School filed suit against the Michigan Board of Education (MBOE) and the Michigan Department of Education (DOE) because of their hostility towards home schoolers. In September 1986, the MBOE rubber-stamped a set of regulations (called 'Procedures') designed to eliminate home schooling. All the while, these same state school officials were encouraging local school officials to be 'proactive in court', a euphemism for 'call 'em criminals, toss 'em in jail, and throw away the key.'

The 'Procedures' included such requirements as these:

a) Home schools would have to use state certified teachers inside the home for only a full 180 days per year and 900 hours of instruction.
b) Parents would be expected to complete a form, the SM-4325, annually assuring officials that a state certified teacher would instruct the students for 180 days per year.
c) Parents were to submit, under SM-4325: 1) name and age of each student in the home school; 2) the name and certificate number of the teacher, and 3) that the teacher instructs the students in English, reading, math, social studies, science, civics and government.
d) Parents who did not comply with the procedures, according to SM-4325, would be subject to truancy or other criminal charges without due process under the law.

Clonlara attacked these ploys from several directions, asserting that:

1. The MBOE/DOE acted illegally in approving the procedures because the document attempted to regulate and legislate home schooling. Neither the MBOE nor the DOE have the right to create laws; that belongs to the state legislature. The 'Procedures' therefore were only the interpretations of state school officials and, as such, they did not have the weight of the law and could be ignored by home educators.
2. Parents' due process was being denied, and before any action could be taken against home schoolers, an administrative hearing must be held.

3. There was no basis in law for the 180 day per year requirement. Judge Thomas Brown in Circuit Court agreed with Clonlara's assertions. He added, on his own, the ruling that only core subjects (reading, writing, math) should be of interest to the state. He deleted science and social studies from the required list. He stated that parents could use the services of a state certified teacher anywhere from two hours a year up to 899 hours a year, **parents' choice.** This use could be by telephone calls or video tapes or audio tapes or at a picnic or a church or wherever.

The MBOE/DOE appealed.

The Michigan Court of Appeals affirmed what Judge Brown ruled and added, on their own, that **there is no law that requires face-to-face contact between any student and a state certified teacher.**

On May 25, 1993, the Michigan Supreme Court handed down the final ruling. Clonlara won on all of its assertions. (The Court went to great lengths to define what the MBOE/DOE can and cannot do by way of interpreting state school laws. It reversed one of Clonlara's original assertions that the MBOE/DOE should have gone through the legislature for approval before publishing the "Procedures". But the end result—that **"Procedures" are NOT** law—remains as Clonlara claimed.)

The Supreme Court ruled that the **"Procedures" are not rules;** they are interpretive statements that do not have the force of law.

The Supreme Court ruled that **the MBOE/DOE must hold an administrative hearing** if it differs with what occurs in the home school. At such a hearing, the DOE must use only the nonpublic school law (never its own interpretation) as the basis for drawing conclusions and making decisions.

The Supreme Court ruled that **the 180 days of instruction per year requirement is not valid.**

The Supreme **Court ruled that "all hours of instruction in home schools must be conducted by certified or certifiable teachers."** Certifiable means that the person holds a bachelor's degree and could, thereby, qualify for a state-issued teaching permit.

On the face of it, this looks as restrictive as the "Procedures" themselves threatened to be. It is not. The Court has muzzled the MBOE/DOE and forced them to obey the nonpublic school law as it is written: home schools (because they are ranked as nonpublic schools) must use state certified or certifiable teachers for all of the instruction. THERE ARE NO

NUMBER OF HOURS PER YEAR OR DAYS PER YEAR SPECIFIED IN THE LAW.

What this amounts to is that if the MBOE/DOE questions the operations of any home school, they cannot employ their old tactics of dragging people into court. They must hold an administrative hearing first and only use the law as the basis for any conclusions.

An administrative hearing is a process. The parents must be informed by mail of an alleged deficiency in the home school. S/He has fifteen days in which to respond. A hearing is set within another specific amount of time. The Superintendent of Public Instruction or his designee conducts the hearing. If a remedial plan is indicated, the parent has, again, a reasonable and specified amount of time in which to make modifications. It is only after this appropriately drawn-out process that any action can be taken. **In all of its years as a bureaucratic entity, the DOE has never held an administrative hearing.**

Now, as if this weren't victory enough, the Michigan Supreme Court simultaneously ruled on two additional cases. Both involved parents who had refused to send their children to institutional schools. Both were found guilty. Both appealed.

Mark and Chris DeJonge from the Grand Rapids area taught their children at home without using a state certified teacher at all because of their religious beliefs. The Court of Appeals upheld their conviction, ruling that the teacher certification requirement was then least restrictive means 'to meet the state's interest. The **Michigan Supreme Court (May 1993)** disagreed; it overturned the DeJonges' conviction, ruling that **the teacher certification requirement is a violation of the First Amendment** which protects from government interference in the exercise of religion, and that the use of a state certified teacher is not the least restrictive means.

John and Sandra Bennett of Canton, Michigan, were found guilty of failure to send their children to Plymouth/ Canton Schools in 1985; they educated four of their children at home. They were enrolled in Clonlara's Home Based Education Program and used a state certified teacher twice a week, on an average. This wasn't enough time, the school officials claimed; the Bennetts were to be fined $50.00 per child.

The Bennetts appealed, asserting that they had a fundamental right under the Fourteenth Amendment to direct the education of their children, and that they had been denied due process under the law because they were prosecuted without first having had an administrative hearing to determine whether or not they were in compliance with the nonpublic school act.

The **Michigan Supreme Court ruled** for the Bennetts on the one hand: their conviction was vacated because, **as administrators of a nonpublic (home) school, the Bennetts were entitled to an administrative hearing before they** could be prosecuted. On the other hand, the Court made a distinction between First Amendment rights and Fourteenth Amendment rights, the latter are not violated by the requirement to use a state certified teacher, the Court said.

So, Michigan parents who home school for religious reasons do not have to use a state certified teacher. Others do, for all of the instruction, but the law does not state how much instruction is required. Perhaps Judge Brown's solution is the best: anywhere from 2 to 899 hours per year.

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Michigan has always been a great place to home school. The growls and fierce barking by the MBOE/DOE frightened some who bothered to take note of their howling, biting, and salivating. The erstwhile pit bulls have effectively been banned with these recent Court rulings.

We have fought a good fight and have prevailed. We are in the company of families—the Bennetts and DeJonges—who have done the same. We were assisted in the struggle by a long-time civil rights lawyer, Kurt Berggren; by the National Association for the Legal Support of Alternative Schools (NALSAS) and its luminary, Ed Nagel; and by numerous Michigan Christian home schoolers. We will continue to be vigilant on behalf of Michigan home educators and home educators the world over. We will continue to work so that each and every parent and student is empowered to control his/her own life. Oooohhhhh, what a feeling! ! ! !

Pat Montgomery, noted author and lecturer—also passionately polemical—is the founder and director of Clonlara School Home Based Education Program.

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WHAT IT'S *REALLY* LIKE TO BE BLACK

by Claire Saffian

'Toughen up, kid. That's the way it is!' Clara Vilarosa said when kids called her daughter 'nigger.'

He is not a *pimp*.'

In Boise, Idaho, Bertha Edwards is talking about her own son. A black mother, she's good at reading white minds.

In the autumn of 1990, her son Jim's car, a Mercedes Benz, was stolen. It was his dream car, bought secondhand with honest money earned as a local disc jockey. But Bertha knows what people say about black men and fancy cars, and she's quick to set the record straight. 'And, no, he's not into drugs.'

When the car was found, the windows were smashed, sand had been poured into the gas tank and more sand and rocks had ruined the engine. The thief signed his work with a one-word message, 'Nigger,' scratched into the side of the car.

In recent weeks, I've been talking with black women and men in cities and towns across the country. In the 1990s, they tell me, it still pinches if you try to walk a while in a black person's shoes.

In St. Louis, Missouri, Maisa Tisdale—Yale-educated—returns to her hotel after a business meeting. 'I'm in my navy-blue suit, like any woman traveling on business,' she says. 'I 'm not in Day-Glo Lycra. But a policeman follows me. "Where do you think you're going?" he wants to know. Before I can get on the elevator, I have to show him my room key. I'm black, so he sees only two possibilities—thief or whore.'

In Denver, Colorado, which may be the most integrated of America's large cities, Clara Villarosa taps her feet impatiently. 'A few years ago, in some restaurants, the waiters were awfully slow to take my order. The food arrived a lot faster at white tables. The same thing happened at the supermarket deli counter. People came after I did, but they were taken ahead of me. And I hardly ever saw a white customer step aside and say, 'No, she was here first.' Now it's less overt, but it still exists.'

In San Francisco, California, Gloria Williams is thrilled when her husband, a Navy lieutenant, is transferred to this romantic city with its reputation for tolerance. Then she spends two weeks trudging up and down the hilly streets, rental ads in hand. Every apartment she likes is 'already taken' or 'no longer on the market.' Finally, she asks her husband, who is white, to take over. Quickly, he manages to rent one of the many places that was 'unavailable' to Gloria.

Gloria shrugs. She knows there will always be white people who don't want to live or work next to blacks. 'Or even sit next to us,' says a black executive from Westport, Connecticut. In his three-piece suit, aboard the crowded commuter train to New York City, he can't help noticing that the seat next to him is always the last one that a white passenger will take. 'And then only in desperation,' he says wryly, 'because it's a long trip.'

The People Behind the Statistics

In human terms, these stories confirm what statistics from the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Relations Service (CRS) tell us—that racism is on the rise.

Reports and alerts of interracial conflicts rose 31 per cent between 1987 and 1989, the latest years for which CRS figures are available. Reports of community disorders, demonstrations and riots were up by 44 percent. Alerts of racial incidents or problems on college campuses almost tripled in that same period. Alleged 'excessive use of force' by police in racial incidents has risen 39 per cent. Racism may even be changing its address: The CRS has been getting more reports from peaceful suburbs than teeming cities.

'We were making some progress,' reports Earl Shinhoster, director of the NAACP regional office in Atlanta, 'but now it's getting worse rather than better.'

Behind the official numbers, there are acts that no one can count, the daily incidents that may not break the law but may break the heart.

Consider the simple act of shopping. In Champaign, Illinois, Donna Jackson, a minister's wife, goes to the mall with a special code of conduct. She makes sure she's well-dressed. She keeps her purse closed and her hands off the items, especially the small ones on display counters. Still, she's aware that she's being watched closely.

'Sometimes, if I'm with my children, we make a game of it. First one to spot the security guard wins an ice cream. But then there's something else. When I put my hand out for the change from that ice cream, does the clerk avoid my hand? Does she put the money on the counter? At times,' Donna says, 'racism can be hard to pin down. Not knowing can drive you crazy. If a clerk is rude to me, is she having a bad day? Or is it my skin?'

Consider catching a cab. 'Even in the daytime, I can't get a taxi unless I'm in a suit and tie,' says David Ruffin, a magazine editor in Washington, DC. 'And even then, I'm sometimes asked to pay the fare in advance.'

Consider trying to get ahead on the job. In Columbia, South Carolina, Jacquelyn Gladden feels racism as a weight, slowing her down in her career as a social worker. 'If I have a plan for one of my clients, it's dismissed as nothing,' she says. 'If a white social worker proposes the same thing, it's a great idea.' She sees her white colleagues gaining important information at professional meetings. 'But I'm black, so I only get to go to meetings if no one else wants to go.'

Consider getting a loan. Clara Villarosa owns the Hue-Man Experience, an African-American bookstore in Denver. Not long ago, she asked her bank for a $6,000 line of credit. 'The savings and loans were lending millions of dollars to those good old boys, with no collateral at all. But I was a black woman, asking for a few thousand. I have a thriving business, but I needed three co-signers.'

As blacks and whites think about these issues, they are 'worlds apart,' according to a 1989 poll for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund. Close to 70 percent of whites think that blacks now have all the equality they need at work, but two out of three blacks disagree. In similar numbers, whites and blacks disagree about how equal the opportunities are in education and housing.

Life and Death

Racism is more than a question of hurt feelings, inconveniences or lost opportunities- it can be a matter of life and death. Dr. Alvin Pouissant, the noted black psychiatrist and author, worries that the bigotry of 'nice people'—the closed doors, the suspicious looks, the little snubs and slurs—explains why some blacks feel angry toward whites and retreat to their own groups.

In 1990 the CRS investigated the shooting of young Philip Pannell by a white policeman in suburban Teaneck, New Jersey. Philip was one of a group of black teenagers hanging out in a school playground. Was he shot because the officer, now indicted for manslaughter, thought Philip was reaching for a gun? Or was he shot because he was black?

Teaneck had long prided itself as a racially peaceful town. Yet black youngsters were often stopped and questioned by police as they walked to school. 'What are you up to?' The youngsters never told anyone until the Justice Department investigated. Black grown-ups were stopped as well, sometimes as they were driving within half a block of their own homes.

They too kept silent, accepting it as the price you paid for being black in a white world.

Suspicion and fear are the emotions of the day. Blacks make up only 12 percent of our population, but they account for 31 percent of our crime. If you're white, do you blame poverty and despair for at least part of that? Or do you think it's in the black genes? Do you clutch your purse a little tighter when a black man passes? Even if he's well-dressed? Do you quicken your step, thinking about the brutal gang rape of the Central Park jogger?

If you're black, do you tremble over other racially charged headlines—a white mob chasing a black man to his death in Howard Beach, New York; jackbooted "skinheads" choosing still another black man at random and clubbing him to death in Portland, Oregon?

In Fort Wayne, Indiana, Virginia Blackburn spends much of her day working on racism and sexism at the Women's Bureau. At night, she's just another black mother, staring into the night, dizzy with an anxiety that's virtually "unbearable" because her teenage son is late getting home.

Worry is an equal-opportunity occupation for all mothers, but this is different. Virginia's son is a young black male in sneakers, the modern-day bogeyman. "What if he's in the wrong place?" On any given day, one in four young black males is involved with the criminal-justice system—in jail, on probation or parole. "Will people see him as a threat?" Will a stranger understand that Clay belongs to the other group, the three in four who are good, law-abiding kids?

"Clay's not sure either," she says. "I can see his body tense up when a white male approaches. He's asked me whether I think his species can survive."

Suffer the Children

The hardest questions are about children. Clara Villarosa is still angry as she remembers the day when one of her daughters, now grown, came home crying because a white classmate had called her bad names like "nigger." While hugging and comforting her child, Clara gave her harsh words to live by.

"Toughen it up, Baby," she told the girl. "Because that's the way it is."

Is Clara right? In the 1990s, is that how it still is?

"Recently, when his third-grade class was performing *The Wizard of Oz,* Donna Jackson's son, Patrick, had his heart set on playing the Wizard. The teacher told him heed be "better off as a

Munchkin.' On opening night, Donna couldn't help noticing that white children had all the lead roles—and black children were all 'better as Munchkins.'

To many blacks, racism is the fourth R. In Hartford, Connecticut, Elizabeth Sheff asks her son's teacher about the 'D' on his report card. Earlier in the year, the white teacher had told her, 'Don't worry,' when her son wasn't doing well. Now she says, 'Well, we didn't expect the children to do well.'

Elizabeth is fighting back. She's become 'the ringleader,' as she calls herself—and 'the troublemaker,' as some white teachers call her—in a lawsuit to raise the quality of education in the city's schools to that of the surrounding, mostly white suburbs. 'Black children don't get smarter just by sitting next to white children,' she says. 'But the teachers get a lot better.'

Clay Blackburn's mother teaches him about black pride, but he goes to school in a neighborhood where the Klan has marched. When his class is told to write about presidential candidates, he wants to do his paper on Jesse Jackson—but his teacher isn't having any of that. Another day he's sent to the principal's office when he refuses to sing 'Dixie' in a music class. 'It's your heritage, ' the teacher insists. 'The teacher can't understand,' says his mother, 'that for my son, the heritage is slavery.'

In Wilton, Connecticut, Janus Adams, founder and president of Harambee, a book club for African-American literature, says, 'I've achieved something, but the schools still didn't expect my children to do well.' Today, one of her daughters is at Spelman College, a traditionally black school in Atlanta, and the other is at mostly white Wesleyan in Middletown, Connecticut. 'The daughter at the white school gets tons of mail from banks, offering her credit cards. The daughter at the black school has never heard of such a thing.'

Says Adell Adams, president of the local NAACP in Columbia, South Carolina, 'In school white kids get suspended, but black kids get expelled.'

What If You Were Black?

We're at the Galaxy Diner, shiny with chrome, a mirror image of diners in a thousand other towns. This one is on Main Street in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The diner is crowded with working-class and middle-income people having supper at 6. I share a leatherette booth with the Tisdale family—Loyse and her Ivy League-educated children, Preston and Maisa.

They are the only blacks in the place.

'What if it were the other way around?' Preston asks. I look at the pleasant white faces around me, trying to imagine them with darker skins. 'What if you were the only white person here?'

So there it is, obvious as the ketchup bottle, the fear on both sides of the table. In this clean and friendly place, is that how my new friends are feeling?

'If you're black, you live with stress,' says Maisa, delicately beautiful, fiercely intelligent. 'You have no security. If I get a job, maybe it's 'the black job,' with its own pay scale and job description. In one office I was told not to be so serious. 'Why don't you make us laugh,' they asked, 'like the black person who was here before?'

'Or maybe it's not the black job, so everyone is wondering what I'm doing there. I'm a Yale graduate, but in one office they wanted someone else to double check all my letters. Give me a break! A white woman with half my education is going to check my spelling?'

Preston, a lawyer, sums up the precarious life of a black male by quoting playwright Melvin Van Peebles. 'If I stand, I'm loitering. If I walk, I'm prowling. If I run, I'm escaping.'

His mother, Loyse Tisdale, works as a travel agent. 'Last week I was standing on line, waiting to cash my pay check. When it was my turn, the bank teller took one look and told me, 'Lady, the food stamps are at the other end.' '

Loyse shakes her head. 'White people,' she says, 'always know how to ruin your day.'

Around the country, as I ask about racism, I keep remembering Frances Ruffin. In a way, this report is my apology to her.

Frances is a handsome woman, bright, ambitious, quietly stylish. A few years ago, when we worked together, she was one of several blacks on the editorial staff of a national magazine. We were colleagues, 9-to-5 chums in an office of liberals, with only a couple of people who pretended to be color blind.

Color blind? As a white woman, I could take my own skin for granted. Did Frances have to think twice about hers? I didn't ask, and Frances didn't walk around with a black chip on her shoulder. As she tells me now, she could forget about color for months at a time.

'And then something would happen.' Frances remembers the day two co-workers came by her cubbyhole and told her that a purse had been stolen. Frances sat there, stiff and silent. 'As they left, one asked me if I was sure I hadn't seen it."

Sorry, Frances. I never knew. As she tells me now, our little office was an ordinary place. "Nothing excruciating happened. Just a few insensitive individuals. The polite prejudice. The small things that can ruin your week."

She remembers another day, when an editor called out to her. "Frances, I've got something to show you. " The woman displayed a shopping trophy, a gorgeous pair of white silk pants. Frances admired them. Then the woman asked, "Frances, could you hem them for me?"

What? Frances was never famous for her skills with a needle. "Some people look at you and see a stereotype," she sighs. "So they always know who the maid is. Or who the thief is."

Sorry, Frances. I never noticed. My friend no longer works for that magazine. She worries that the ugly old words, taboo in the glow of the civil rights era' are being heard again.

"This year, after all these years of living in New York, it happened to me twice: A white stranger passed me on the street and hissed, 'Nigger! Nigger!' "

Frances is angry. "I'm a grown-up. I can handle it," she says. "But I'm also a mother." Her son, Timmy, is 8 now, cute, smart, a bit shy. "My heart stops when I think that someone might call Timmy a bad name."

Does growing up black have to mean growing up hurt?

Why? One day, that may be Timmy's question. And how will Frances answer? How would you?

Claire Safran, a contributing editor at Woman's Day, has won many awards for her articles. Reprinted from WOMAN'S DAY for 5/28/91.

It might be said that advocacy for school reform—or even school abolition—creates odd bedfellows, especially when you look back at the old political distinctions between radical, liberal and conservative. This bitterly polemical article from Forbes is a case in point. As an old radical, I am constitutionally biased against labor union denouncers, even though I know full well that there has been wide-spread racketeering in many places, Lord Acton being right on the money about power of any kind!

Also, as the editor of ΣΚΟΛΕ I intend to bend over backward to give differing points of view a fair hearing. So, I'd love to hear from subscribers how delighted/horrified/enraged/overjoyed or whatever you may feel about it. It did cry to be reproduced here, so here it is:

Forbes • June 7, 1993

As the National Education Association has gained in monopoly power, the cost of education has increased, while its quality has deteriorated. But monopolies are by nature unstable, and this undemocratic labor union may have met its match in the movement for school choice.

THE NATIONAL EXTORTION ASSOCIATION?

by Peter Brimelow and Leslie Spencer

"...quit talking about letting kids escape..."

—Keith Geiger, 52, president of the National Education Association teachers union, denouncing the increasingly popular idea that tax monies now spent on education should instead be given directly to students to be spent in the public or private school of their choice; on the Larry King Show, Nov. 10, 1992.

KEITH GEIGER'S STYLE may be more polished now than in his salad days as president of the NEA'S Michigan Education Association affiliate, when he astonished Walsh College economics professor Harry C. Veryser by gesticulating obscenely at him during an in-studio radio debate. "He flipped me the finger when school choice came up," remembers Veryser, who jokes that the union's ruthless and insatiable drive for power and perquisites should earn it a new name: the National Extortion Association.

Hyperbolic? The fact is that the most powerful U.S. trade union plays very rough, blaming "Reaganomics" as the Alpena, Mich. school system shut down—apparently the first school shutdown for budgetary reasons since the Great Depression—after voters had repeatedly refused to increase local property taxes. (The blackmail worked: Alpena capitulated, along with several other Michigan districts threatened with shutdown.)

And in March 1993 Geiger was still at it: As NEA president, he appeared in person at a rally in another northern Michigan town, Kalkaska, as it ended its school year two months early, again after voters had repeatedly rejected tax hikes.

Geiger's implicit message to the voters: Never mind the nonsense about teaching as a public trust; pay up or we'll shut you down.

The Kalkaska shutdown got nationwide publicity. But FORBES has learned that it was little more than a union-orchestrated stunt. Kalkaska's school budget was not out of line with that of other districts in the region. Its main problem, since teachers' compensation makes up about 65% of all school budgets: a contract calling for 6% annual salary increases three years running. This in a poor rural area (average income: about $22,000), where teachers (average income: about $32,000) are already among the top earners. And the school system could easily have made cuts, for example, in support staff or busing. Or it could have followed established procedures for going into deficit. The shutdown expenses amounted to $1.1 million. The teachers' retirement scheme, for instance, had to be fully funded. (The teachers themselves, of course, are eligible for unemployment benefits.) But the union had made its point for other parents-taxpayers who might be tempted to trifle with it.

"We coordinated the whole thing when the (shutdown) decision was made," boasts Allan Short, chief lobbyist for the Michigan Education Association. "We rented a dish and set it up there." So complete was the union capture of Kalkaska's school board that an editorial writer from the *Detroit News*, which has watched critically while the NEA displaced the United Auto Workers as the principal power in Michigan politics, found his phone call asking for the board's viewpoint referred to the local NEA office.

Interviewed in the NEA's breathtakingly palatial Washington, D.C. headquarters, Keith Geiger tells FORBES that other Michigan school districts now face shutdowns—if their voters don't cough up on cue. Which is why the NEA fights all voucher and choice proposals that might allow students to "escape" to a private school. They are needed as hostages.

The 2.1-million-member National Education Association—

which some years ago passed the Teamsters to become the country's biggest union—is the worm in the American education apple. The public may be only dimly aware of it, but the union's growing power has exactly coincided with the dismal spectacle of rising spending on education producing deteriorating results.

"After the post office, schools are the most unionized activity in America," says Lamar Alexander, who as U.S. Secretary of Education and governor of Tennessee found his re-form proposals repeatedly blocked by the NEA and its Tennessee affiliate. "They collect a lot of money in dues, they are often the largest lobby in the state, they are very, very powerful.... Only a very determined governor has the influence to marshal enough power to overcome (affiliate) opposition."

The NEA's intense commitment to partisan politics, which is both ideological and also its method of exerting influence, is widely recog-nized. NEA Executive Director Don Cameron, 55, has described it as "axiomatic." Says William J. Bennett, another former Secretary of Education: "You're looking at the absolute heart and center of the Democratic Party." In fact, in some states the affiliate seems virtually to have become the Democratic Party. Thus, in 1990 Alabama, where some 40% of the legislature were teachers, ex-teachers or teachers' spouses, state Education Association Executive Secretary-Treasurer Paul Hubbert won the Democratic gubernatorial nomination, while his staff was asked to raise $20 per member to finance his unsuccessful general election campaign. He is preparing to run again in 1994.

On the federal level, the NEA endorsed Clinton in July 1992. Later that month almost one in eight delegates to the Democratic National Convention were NEA members—the largest single bloc, as it claims has been the case at every Democratic convention since 1976. In January 1993 the NEA celebrated its victory by sending posters entitled "Bill Clinton's and Al Gore's Most Excellent Inaugural" to more than 26,000 junior high and middle schools.

Also fairly well known, although now perhaps less obvious with the end of the Cold War, is the NEA's streak of left-wing looneyism. Unlike a decade ago, the nuclear freeze campaign no longer operates from its offices. But the NEA remains committed to the radical bromide that sweeping social reform must precede any real education reform. Blame the system, not the teachers. Thus NEA Executive Director Don Cameron is "chair" of the Center for Policy Alternatives, the liberal think tank that has virtually invented the latest fashionable idea on picking the public pocket: economically targeted investing (ETI), the use by pension funds of their members' money for politically targeted subsidies to various liberal-favored enterprises—and their indemnification by taxpayers for the inevitable losses.

But NEA'S zealotry still shows occasionally. Thus, immediately after Clinton's inauguration, the NEA demanded and got the instant firing of Tom Tancredo, Bush Education Department Denver regional representative, in revenge for his outspoken public support for educational choice in Colorado. And last vear the NEA-affiliated California Teachers Association used unprecedented tactics to disrupt the effort to place a school choice initiative on the ballot—including blocking would-be signators' access to the petition in shopping malls, allegedly sabotaging the petition with fake names and offering a signature-collecting firm $400,000 to decline the account. (The effort succeeded in winning a delay, but the issue will be on the ballot in 1994.) The justification offered at the 1992 NEA convention by CTA President D.A. Weber was frankly totalitarian: 'There are some proposals that are so evil that they should never even be presented to the voters. We do not believe, for example, that we should hold an election on 'empowering' the Ku Klux Klan. And we would not think it's 'undemocratic' to oppose voting on legalizing child prostitution.'

It takes a real zealot to compare those who oppose raises for schoolteachers with promoters of child prostitution. But that's what the NEA thinks about allowing you to choose your children's schools.

'If I become President, you'll be my partners. I won't forget who brought me to the White House.' These words were spoken by Bill Clinton to the NEA candidate screening panel in December 1991, according to press reports.

Despite its power, the NEA receives surpris-ingly little attention from Washington's huge press corps. FORBES found no major profiles of President Geiger and Executive Director Cameron (who apparently like it that way—they even refuse to appear in *Who's Who in Amcrica).*

So who are Bill Clinton's new partners? A FORBES inspection refines the general view in several ways:

- The NEA is even bigger, more centralized, more politically influential and in key respects nastier than is realized.
- Although fqunded as a professional association in 1857, thc NEA was totally recast as a labor union in the 1960s, largely by a little-known, tightly knit clique who still control it. This is

the "Michigan mafia," including Terry Herndon, Keith Geiger and Don Cameron, who all began their NEA careers, importing labor union methods into Michigan schools. The modern NEA is actually a new, radical and still-evolving phenomenon on the American scene. Its full consequences are far from clear.

• Even more than traditional labor unions, the NEA is critically dependent on legal privileges and favorable public policy. The result is a weird institutional mutant: part-labor union, part insurance conglomerate (of all things), part self-perpetuating staff oligarchy. And part political party—as Edwin Vieira, a former law professor and consultant for the National Right To Work Committee, argued in a 1978 *DePaul Law Review* article. Through its collective bargaining power, this mutant has claimed privileged access to public policy-making. It could well be alien to American constitutional principles of equal protection and republican government.

• The NEA'S rise is directly linked with the 30-year decline of American education that occurred simultaneously—not just in terms of quality, but especially in terms of quantity: education's crushing, and incessantly cumulating, cost.

Far more than other unions, the NEA saturates most of the nation. Its power is felt almost everywhere. It has 52 state-level affiliates and some 13,000 local-level affiliates. In each community these may appear autonomous. But in fact the NEA plays a powerful centralizing role. "Keith (Geiger) personally contacts all local presidents who are on strike," says Beverly Wolkow, hired by Geiger to her current position of Michigan Education Association executive director in 1981. And, unusually for a labor union, the organization divides authority between quickly rotated elected teachers and school employees, such as the presidents, and permanent professional staff, such as executive directors, who critics say tend to control it.

Any teacher joining a local education association, the level at which salaries are mostly bargained, also involuntarily joins a state affiliate and the national organization, which together consume most of the strikingly high membership dues. (Average: about $400 a year—compared with $99 for the independent Missouri State Teachers Association.) Imposing a single "unified dues" payment, thus extracting that state and national tribute automatically, was top priority for the 1960s union-builders. It was not achieved without controversy: The Missouri State Teachers Association eventually seceded from the NEA over the issue.

Regardless of its needs, NEA dues are a fixed proportion of the average teacher's salary. Thus, just as real estate agents have a vested interest in rising property prices, so does the NEA havc a direct institutional interest in teacher salary increases. In 1992-93 it got $96 per member. But the NEA's dues income of about $165 million was only a fraction of the total dues collected through-out the union structure. FORBES estimate: an impressive $750 million.

The NEA'S centralizing power is further enhanced by its partial financial support and effective control of the about 1,500 'UniServ' professionals, at least one in every congres-sional district. Their official function: to assist locals with collective bargaining. But they also constitute what has been called the largest field army of paid political organizers and lobbyists in the U.S., dwarfing the forces of the Republican and Democratic national committees combined.

In theory the NEA has internal democracy. But in practice it is firmly controlled by its leadership—Geiger is running for reelection this year unopposed. Democracy has been diluted by a number of devices, such as staggered terms and ethnic and gender quota plans. NEA members do not vote directly for their leaders, but instead for an obviously unwieldy 8,600-member Repesentative Assembly, which in turn elects key officers. Naturally, the NEA leadership controls the union's communication organs. Although Geiger and Cameron insist that teacher turnout in NEA elections is high, others say apathy rules.

Which, after all, would explain a celebrated NEA conundrum: how the union can be so left-wing when its own figures show that a third of its members are Republicans and well over 40% voted for Ronald Reagan—and, in 1988, for George Bush.

For example, regardless of what its members may or may not believe, the union generally opposes *any* effort to limit government spending. 'Wherever we go,' says James Dale Davidson, chairman of the National Taxpayers Union, which has been conducting a state-by-state battle for a federal balanced budget amendment, 'the NEA is our main opponent.'

And the NEA puts more than is generally realized of its members' money where its leadership's mouth is. Its Political Action Committee raised roughly $6.5 million and spent $2.3 million on congressional candidates last year. 'The balance,' speculates David Denholm of the union-watching Public Service Research Foundation, 'probably goes back to the state level to fight things like school choice.'

But the state and local education associations also have

PACs. NEA claims it doesn't know how much they spend. Extrapolating from four representative states, however, FORBES was able to make a conservative estimate: State and local spending must amount at least to a staggering $16 million. For instance, Indiana's 1 state and 31 associated local PACs raised almost $700,000 from their 41,000 members in 1990. They spent just under $500,000.

The teachers union can raise money more easily than its political rivals, because its overhead is already in place. PAC money is usually collected right along with dues, often automatically deducted from salaries unless members specifically opt out. And election law allows the union to spend without limit on communicating with its members, who are quite numerous enough to make a difference in close elections.

Nor does the union have to report 'in-kind' spending, such as volunteer work. Thus, Deborah Hawley, campaign consultant for the narrowly defeated pro-school-choice candidate in the recent Wisconsin state school superintendent race, says her office received reports that the state NEA affiliate ordered teachers to write anti-choice postcards to a minimum number of acquaintances—and to bring the postcards into union headquarters, so that their compliance could be checked. (The NEA affiliate denies it.)

The nastier side of labor unions, particularly Michigan labor unions, is usually ignored. But the Springfield, Va.-based National Right to Work Committee, the leading opponent of union power, is happy to provide a thick file of local newspaper clippings on teacher union harassment, vandalism and violence.

'We slipped agency shop (compulsory unionism) through in the early 1970s,' Michigan Education Association lobbyist Al Short says casually. But for retired Swartz Creek teacher Kay Jackson, who didn't want to join any union, it was anything but casual. It meant over a decade of litigation and ostracism—even, she believes, dead cats thrown at her house and the murder of her pet German shepherd. Talking to FORBES at the age of 78, some 24 years after it all began, she bursts into tears at the memory.

And it's happening today to John Jenkins, the black Chicago filmmaker and parent who is the plaintiff in the Washington, D.C.-based Institute for Justice public interest law firm's ingenious suit arguing that education vouchers are actually required by Illinois' constitution. He says threatening phone calls forced him to move his family to a hotel. They only stopped after extensive publicity.

How did the NEA achieve such extraordi-nary economic and political power? It's the result of a sort of institutional accident, as with pilots before airline deregulation or trial lawyers today (FORBES, *Oct. 16, 1989)*. From an economic point of view, all unions are legally-sanctioned efforts to monopolize a particular labor supply. But the teachers union is in an exceptional position: the near-monopoly supplier to a government-enforced monopoly consumer. In effect, it has been awarded the equivalent of a cable tv franchise—without any of the countervailing regulation.

Precisely because of the obvious potential for abuse even labor union advocates like AFL-CIO President George Meany and Frank-lin D. Roosevelt viewed unionization of the public sector as unthinkable. But this abruptly changed in the 1960s. In return for labor support, President Kennedy issued an executive order allowing collective bargaining for federal employees. Similar developments occurred at the state level: most prominently, collective bargaining for New York City teachers, won after a bitter struggle by rival Al Shanker's AFT in 1961. Which in turn enabled militants like the 'Michigan mafia' to transform the NEA from what Don Cameron derides as a 'tea and crumpets' professional organization.

But Cameron is far from deriding the NEA'S status as a federally chartered corporation, which dates from its professional association days. This rare privilege, shared by organizations like the American Red Cross but by no other labor unions, exempts the NEA from property taxes. That could be saving it some $2 million a year—a lot of crumpets.

The public sector unions have grown at exactly the point when private sector unions have gone into decline. In 1958 only 12% of the public sector was unionized; by 1992 it was 37%. By contrast, 35% of the private sector was unionized; in 1992, only 11%. Some 40% of union members are now in the public sector.

As Rutgers economist Leo Troy argues in detail in his recent book *Tbe New Unionism in the New Society: Public Sector Unions in the Redistributive State* (George Mason University Press), these 'new unions' are fundamentally different from the 'old,' private sector unions. Their primary weapon is political, not economic, power. They use it to redistribute income toward government, a process Troy calls the 'new socialism,' and to insulate themselves from the key factor in private sector union decline: competition, from the service sector and from overseas.

But even among 'new' unions, the NEA is in a privileged position. Like all public sector unions, it is not subject to the

National Labor Relations Act's prohibition of union encroachment on management prerogatives. There are state restrictions. But teachers unions often capture school managements anyway. The minimal barriers are easily circumvented: For example, Michigan teachers are prohibited from running in the school district where they work But they run in districts where they live. Teacher strikes are illegal. But the law never seems to be enforced.

Unlike federal government unions, teachers unions are not subject to Hatch Act restrictions on political activity. Again, there are state restrictions. But they don't prevent classroom atrocities: Even the *Washington Post* has editorialized three times recently against teachers refusing to write college recommendations unless the students and their families supported aspects of the union's agenda.

Without its legal privileges, the NEA's power melts away. In Texas, a right-to-work state where teachers cannot be forced to join the NEA, the imposition of unified dues caused many eventually to leave for Association of Texas Professional Educators, a genuine professional association that is now about as large. And Supreme Court rulings have resulted in bitter litigation over the proportion of dues devoted to collective bargaining rather than to partisan politics and other activities—the 'fair share' non-members in agency-shop states must pay. Horrifying precedent for the NEA: The 'fair share' determined in the case of the Communications Workers of America was just 21%.

The NEA is not only a monopoly: it also endeavors to be a monopsony—a monopoly of buyers. Like the American Association of Retired Persons (FORBES, *Feb. 22, 1988*), it is a political lobby that quietly profits from marketing insurance to its members. But the teachers union can sometimes suppress com-petition.

Federal government filings show that the NEA has been receiving about $10 million a year, 30% of the premium members pay for NEA-marketed Prudential life insurance. This is, in effect, the NEA's very high rake-off for handling life insurance, through a complex arrangement, for its trusting members. Additionally, the NEA gets to keep part of the float. (Other services to members also bring the NEA a further $20-million-plus a year. The NEA nonprofit subsidiary involved in all this has built up net assets exceeding $65 million.)

All of which casts an interesting light on last year's uproar in the Washington, D.C. suburban area of Fairfax County, Va. On the recommendation of an NEA-influenced employee committee, the school board transferred teacher health insurance business from Blue Cross & Blue Shield of the National Capital Area to Prudential. Critics claimed the coverage was inferior and more expensive. They alleged a number of motives, including the fact that the Prudential Foundation has made $300,000 in donations to an NEA foundation.

NEA President Keith Geiger felt obliged to respond to the criticism in an open letter to school employees dated May 4, 1992. Mysteriously, despite the grant and the NEA's life insurance relationship with Prudential, he claimed that "NEA receives no money or other financial benefit—in the form of an exclusivity fee or otherwise—from the Prudential Insurance Co."

What's going on? Critics speculate that the NEA wants to create a nationwide health monopsony using Prudential, paralleling Prudential's life and disability business. Geiger and Cameron deny it.

FORBES tried to talk to Prudential about its NEA relationship. But it never got back to us. However, we know the insurance company is very sensitive to labor union concerns. The National Right to Work Committee says that during the construction of its new headquarters, Prdential, the financier, removed its name from the work-in-progress sign—apparently because of union protests.

Still, Geiger and Cameron's Michigan exper-ience might well have inspired them. The state is the home of the granddaddy monopsony of teachers union insurance: the Michigan Education Special Services Association (Messa), a 200-plus-staff, $370 million (revenues) subsidiary of the Michigan Education Association.

Messa sells Blue Cross & Blue Shield teacher health insurance to school districts. "We just aim to break even," MEA's Beverly Wolkow told FORBES. But in fact Messa's 1989-92 "surplus" totaled about $87 million. Its insurance costs some $1,000 more per head than the state employee health plan. But who cares? The cost is just bargained into contracts under the threat of strikes and passed on to taxpayers.

Critics say that Messa just duplicates Blue Cross & Blue Shield's administration, adding some $27 million in operating costs. But to the MEA, the subsidiary is immensely valuable. Apart from paying the MEA an annual fee of some $1.5 million, Messa buys computer and other services from the MEA's for-profit Michigan Education Data Network Association (Medna) at a cost of over $8 million in fiscal 1992. Messa may well be subsidizing the MEA in other ways: All three operations are so integrated that they share the same switchboard, and Messa carries MEA workers on its payroll.

Messa, in turn, strengthens the MEA's grip on Michigan's teachers. 'You take members that don't believe in collective bargaining, that don't believe in our political ends, but you talk to them about Messa, they'll stand in the middle of a highway to defend it,' says MEA lobbyist Al Short. 'That's the tie.'

Michigan school boards know that any threat to the Messa relationship is a strike issue for the MEA. But even if a school board can escape, its ability to find a lower bidder is weakened because Messa will not release its actuarial history. There appear to be serious legal questions about this practice—and about whether Messa shares risk with Blue Cross & Blue Shield (Wolkow told FORBES it does) and is therefore itself an unsurer, subject to regulation.

Then there's the NEA's intriguing relabonship with Horace Mann Educators Corp., a property/casualty and life insurer founded in 1945 and named after a patron saint of public education, which specializes in marketing to educators. According to former NEA executive director Terry Herndon—who now (surprise!) runs the Wisconsin NEA affiliate's insurance arm—the early leadership of Horace Mann came from the executive directors of several NEA state affiliates. Some affiliates and individuals associated with them owned Horace Mann stock. At one point the NEA itself held stock options. But, Herndon says, he let them lapse because he considered it a conflict of interest.

Today the NEA says that Horace Mann pays it $400,000 in a 'fixed-fee' agreement in return for 'sponsoring' Horace Mann products to its members. However, Horace Mann says, and has reported to the Securities & Exchange Commission in its Form 10-K, that it 'does not pay NEA or any affiliated associations any consideration in exchange for sponsorship,' although it acknowledges buying advertising in NEA publications. Coincidentally, Prudential Insurance now owns some 13% of the Horace Mann common stock.

Horace Mann is one of the companies that has at various times provided the NEA with the professional liability insurance it offers its members. Liability is a real concern for teachers because of the increasing threat of litigation from parents and hungry tort lawyers. The NEA insurance program, included in member dues, further strengthens the union's grip on teachers. Significantly, non-members who pay fair-share dues are not eligible.

Lamar Alexander, as governor of Tennessee, proposed that teachers' liability insurance be provided by the state. To his astonishment, the NEA opposed him. 'They were busy spending member money keeping the state from paying for liability insurance. They called what I was doing union busting,' he says. 'They consistently advocate proposals that are against the interest of their members.'

The NEA is a political science textbook case: it exemplifies the so-called iron law of oligarchy, the tendency of membership organizations to degenerate from democracies into elite-driven groups serving the interests of their leaders. Indeed, one of the most powerful NEA leaders has never been a classroom teacher at all: longtime general counsel Robert Chanin, who has been generously allowed to go off staff to work from a major labor law firm and won't reveal his income.

For all the union's enthusiasm for redistributing income, its officials pay themselves very well. Geiger and Cameron's salaries and other payments (totaling $214,000 and $180,000, respectively, in 1991-92) are deliberately fairly low to avoid upsetting teachers (national average salary: $35,000). But this is deceptive: The union salary pyramid looks distinctly like the Michelin Man. Many Washington staffers earn six figures; secretaries make $40,000; fringe benefits, said to be the most generous in Washington, are worth another 35%. At the state level, Geiger and Cameron's opposite numbers earn almost as much as they do. UniServ operatives in the field make $50,000 to $75,000, with extremely generous contracts. Not surprisingly, many teachers elected to union posts eventually join the permanent staff.

What do teachers get for supporting this oligarchy? A powerful union local can sometimes extort startling salaries—in Bucks County, Pa., for example, some teachers are earning $80,000 and lavish benefits. (For a 180-day year!) But, as always with labor unions, it is less clear that the NEA can raise overall average salaries by more than 5% or 10%, compared with nonunion teachers. And to achieve this, of course, it must insist that exceptional teachers forgo the fruits of their individual talents—in the form of merit pay—to maintain the common front.

What unions can do is impose costs on the schools that don't necessarily go to the union members. One 1986 study by University of Oregon researchers showed per-pupil expendi-ures in unionized districts 15% higher than in nonunion areas. Myron Lieberman, a former teacher union leader who has emerged as a leading free-market analyst of education at the age of 74 ('I'm a slow learner'), estimates that the collective bargaining process itself imposes direct and indirect costs that may run into the billions of dollars.

The rise of teacher unions has coincided with cost and quality deterioration in the nation's public schools. Whether correlation means cause is, of course, disputed. What cannot be disputed is that the union wields increasing control over management of the public schools. 'The unions are most successful at getting control of the curriculum,' says University of Chicago economist Sam Peltzman, who has conducted elaborate econometric studies of the impact of unionization. 'My basic finding,' he says, 'is that where the unions get a toehold, performance ultimately deteriorates—sometimes after as much as a decade.'

After Bill Clinton's election victory, his NEA partner resembles nothing so much as Leonid Brezhnev's Soviet Union after the fall of South Vietnam. It appears everywhere triumphant. Its political organizers, like the Red Army, are unmatched and undefeated. It even has its equivalent of Eurocommunism, in the form of an apparently imminent merger with the long-hostile AFT. And it has its Brezhnev doctrine: Socialism, in the form of government monopoly schooling, cannot be rolled back anywhere.

But, like Brezhnev's Soviet Union, the NEA has problems. It has shown it can defeat choice anywhere—but it can afford to lose nowhere. And the danger is growing. NEA itself reports that according to the new Gallup poll, over two-thirds of the American people—70%—now support the idea of giving parents public tax dollars to send their children to private school. In last year's poll, only half the American people supported private-school vouchers. 'If I was running a school choice referendum,' says the AFT's Al Shanker, 'it would win.'

(He declined to tell FORBES how. Myron Lieberman suggests one essential: Buy off the incumbent teachers, perhaps with guaranteed benefits, just as Margaret Thatcher bought off union member opposition to privatizing nationalized industries with stock options.)

Not even the NEA can fight on all fronts at once. Increasingly, however, it must. Thus the National Taxpayers Union's Jim Davidson has a simple counter to NEA opposition: 'We like to see a school choice initiative started. That distracts them.'

It works. In 1990 the Oregon NEA affiliate defeated a state choice initiative. But a property tax cap initiative passed. This year the NEA affiliate defeated the school choice candidate in Wisconsin. But Republicans took control of the State Senate for the first time in two decades.

Above all, like Brezhnev's Soviet Union, the NEA has chosen to commit itself to an economic system that cannot work. Thus Myron Lieberman is summarizing his public education career in a forthcoming book, *Public Education: An Autopsy* (Harvard University Press). It is a classic and un-answerable application of economic concepts to education. And it concludes:

'The promarket forces have one ineradicable advantage in the years ahead. That advantage is the inherent futility of conventional school reform.'

As long as schools remain a government monopoly, Lieberman argues, cost and quality will be as bad as cost and quality is everywhere else under socialism.

Which, after all, is why the NEA's Bill Clinton—like 22% of NEA teachers, twice the national average— chooses to put his child in a private school.

And here's the followup, from the following month's issue:

National Extortion Association pro and con

SIR: Your 'article' on the National Education Association *(June 7) (is)* an ultraconservative smear on an association that opposes the use of public tax dollars for private and religious schools. If your intent was to excoriate, at the expense of objectivity, an organization that has a long and proud record of advocacy for its members, for public education and for human rights, you succeeded.

—KEITH GEIGER, *President,*
National Education Association Washington, DC.

SIR: It's about time someone with clout tackled this power-hungry, anti child and anti parent behemoth.

—H. H. HARRIS
Atlanta, Ga.

SIR: Your article is timely, courageous and commendable. Several years ago your magazine published useful data about the close relation between the AARP and an insurance company and questioned whether the AARP members were getting a good deal. It surely helped move AARP to open up the business to competition.

—EARL. CLARK
Alexandria, Va.

SIR: A fourth grade teacher in a San Antonio public school read a book aloud to my cousin's child that included an obscenity. When the parents got upset, the principal and school board initially were on the parents' side. But then the teachers threatened to take the controversy to court, and the principal and school board caved in to the teachers' demand. No wonder more and more parents arc deciding to homeschool their children.

—LAURA M. FINK
Ft. Leavenworth, Kans.

SIR: In Illinois the National Education (Extortion) Association pressured our legislators to pass a five and five bill. This lets teachers retire five years ahead of time or get credit on pension for five years they do not teach. Heck of a way to save money.

—GENE HARSHMAN
Quincy, Ill.

SIR: It is impossible to get a good education from a system that is established by politicians, managed by bureaucrats, and staffed by unionized strike-prone graduates of a Mickey Mouse academy.

—WALT BUESCHER
Pigeon Forge, Tenn.

SIR: When Hillary Clinton completes her reform of the health care system what will she do for an encore? Public school education reform? I hope so, but probably not.

—JOSEPH MANZINGER
Pittsburgh, Pa.

SIR: Had George Bush not campaigned on personalities or character but on education and had a knock-down-drag-out battle against the NEA, he could have still been President Bush today.

—VICTOR LURSKY
Bath, Pa.

SIR: Fifty years ago the California Department of Education reported that talking out of turn was the worst behavioral problem of students in public school Today it is drug abuse. I'll bet that the NEA caused that, too!

BILL WOOLWORTH
Long Barn, Calif.

SIR: From your June 7 issue, I infer that the NEA is the school kid's worst scourge since Ichabod Crane.

—WILLIAM SHEELEY
Phoenix, Ariz.

SIR: Communications technology will break the NEA stranglehold in the next decade. Teaching by interactive TV will be an unstoppable revolution. Think about it: When one outstanding teacher can teach Economics 101 or American History to thousands of students, replacing thousands of sometimes mediocre teachers each teaching 20 students, there will be no stopping this tidal wave.

—H.R. GODSCHALK
Macon, Ga.

SIR: Many of us suffered as students during the worst years of the NEA agenda, the Seventies. We know firsthand that a free market is essential for education. Here, in California, we may defeat the NEA and pass a school choice initiative as early as November. Imagine Americans everywhere choosing where to educate their children—little wonder the NEA is running scared.

—SCOTT HOLLERAN
Glendale, Calif.

SIR: [I am] a member of the National Education Association's staff currently working at its Washington, D.C. headquarters. I request that you not print this letter for attribution. Your portrayal of NEA was quite accurate. In fact, it may have been too kind. There are a few issues that could have been explored further.

NEA maintains a management hierarchy of tyrants and bullies who are vicious, malicious and relentless in their pursuit of control.

NEA's ties to the Clinton campaign went far deeper than you suggest in the article. Legions of NEA employees were dispatched to Clinton campaign headquarters in Little Rock and sites throughout the U.S. All NEA staff were surveyed in September 1992 to determine how (not whether) they would contribute to the Clinton campaign. The level of NEA involvement in the Clinton campaign suggests that the NEA needs to be subjected to restrictions on political activity similar to those provided by the Hatch Act.

—NAME WITHHELD
FOR OBVIOUS REASONS

SIR: The only way out of this educational nightmare is school choice.

—EUGENE L. NOTKIN
Saugus, Mass.

SIR: While serving some 20 of the past 30 years as a member of a local board of education in Michigan, I have had to sit helplessly by while the National Education Association and its local and regional affiliates, aided by some preposterous, shortsighted and unfair laws, gained its awesome power over our taxpayers.

It would be an admirable service to education if FORBES would make it possible for all local school boards, administrations, parent and parent-teacher associations in the nation to obtain reprints of this article for distribution at a reasonable cost.

—ALBERT H. MEINKE
Kewadin, Mich.

SIR: In the public schools standardized test scores (including SAT and ACT) are usually lowest in the inner cities and highest in the wealthier suburbs. Does this mean that the NEA corrupts inner city schools more than it does those in the suburbs?

—KAY LEWIS
Ashland, Ore.

SIR: A voucher system would cause another level of bureaucracy to be created for the monitoring of more new and diverse schools. Unscrupulous operators of some of these new schools will only be interested in the vouchers and not in the education.

—LEE FORD
Carmichael, Calif.

SIR: Do blame the NEA for the fivefold increase in per-pupil expenditures. To blame it for poor SAT scores, you'd have to explain why the "right to-work" states are mostly at the bottom of any scholastic achievement rankings. A more likely culprit is TV. In the early fifties we read comic books, so we did well in the 1963 SATs.

—MIMI GERSTELL
Pasadena, Calif.

SIR: American public schools are arguably the largest socialized enterprise in the world. Good teachers are not rewarded for a job well done. Teachers and administrators with special qualifications and skills find little or no monetary reward. Weak public school teachers are transferred from building to building.

—WILLIAM R. MASON Jr.
Westerville, Ohio

SIR: All our national enemies combined could not mount a more serious threat to national security than the NEA.

—MERRITT L. DEARY
Boca Raton, Fla.

SIR: The Public Broadcasting System, fiber optics and CD ROM will enhance the capabilities of quality school systems, and replace the poor and mediocre school systems.

—GLEN W. COPE
Longmeadow, Mass.

Sir: You failed to mention that almost all teachers are not only protected by their collective bargaining agreements but also by tenure laws. It's impossible to fire an incompetent teacher, and have you ever heard of the NEA policing its own ranks?

—PATRICK MONAHAN
Arcola, Ill.

Sir: My daughter is in kindergarten, where they do not have enough 'time or money' to teach children to read, but they have the time to tell the children how their parents should vote! It is disgusting.

—PATTIE S. CHRISTENSEN
Longmont, Colo.

SIR: The article's leading chart [showing] lowered SAT scores since the middle sixties could also [signify] more mothers joining the work force and increased divorce rates, which take mom and dad out of the home. The quality of schools can only reflect the quality in the communities they serve.

—KURT SCHULTZ
Napa, Calif.

SIR: Most teachers and administrators are also caught in the system that breeds mediocrity and conflict, and destroys positive initiative.

—DOROTHY WOOD
Las Vegas, Nev.

SIR: In the beginning years of unionization of teachers, the county superintendent of schools, a wise and alert man, told my husband, who was serving on the school board, that this was the beginning of the destruction of quality education in the public schools. How right he was.

—KATHRYN DEARBORN
La Porte, Ind.

SIR: FORBES ought to be renamed the national distortion magazine.

—RICHARD C. SHAW
Houston, Tex.

SIR: The solution is clear and simple, choice and competition.

—AVNISH P. PANDYA
Kanab, Utah

SIR: There is ample documentation of miraculous educational successes in communities across our country, but I am aware of no contributions by the NEA to those successes.

—JAMES M. PETERSON
Minneapolis, Minn.

SIR: Sure the NEA is self-serving, fosters the illusion that more money will bring us better schools, and indoctrinates the young in liberal philosophies. Sins enough! Yet the NEA is just a mirror held up to our society; if we don't like the reflection we shouldn't blame the mirror.

—OLWEN MATTHEWS
Cocoa Beach, Fla.

***Forbes* • July 19, 1993.**

And now for some more cockles-of-the-heart-warming news about the creative genius of a friend of ours who has done what we thought could never happen!

REVIEW:

WHY DO THESE KIDS LOVE SCHOOL?

by Mary Anne Raywid

Ms. Raywid describes a film that has powerful lessons to teach, including the simple message that there are schools in this country "where innovation is the norm, mutual respect is the standard, and children truly enjoy learning."

THE TITLE of this article is taken directly from the title of an extraordinary film that has an extraordinary history and makes an extraordinary impact on viewers. Almost everything about "Why Do These Kids Love School?"—its sponsorship, its topic, its length, its distribution, and its amazing success—breaks the mold of "educational films." Many educators have asked, "Why isn't there a film that makes schooling as vivid and appealing as movies manage to make other things?" This film is the answer. Moreover, as one reviewer put it, "This could be the most important media coverage that child-centered education has ever received."

"Why Do These Kids Love School?" is an extremely powerful statement that viewers have described as "moving," "inspiring," and "creating hope." It manages not only to produce a strong emotional impact but also to provide a remarkably intimate look at life inside nine different schools. It successfully conveys a sense of the spirit and personality of the schools portrayed, and it even manages to suggest something of what makes them tick.

The film is the work of a filmmaker who, out of a combination of curiosity and gratitude, set out to make a movie about the school her children had attended. She began with a sense of the discrepancy between the way most children experience school and the joyousness with which her two daughters had experienced it.

And so, Dorothy Fadiman set out to make a documentary about the Peninsula School, a 65-year-old independent, progressively oriented school in Menlo Park, California. As she tells it, the challenge proved so fascinating that she spent several years filming at the school. Eventually, realizing that viewers might attribute the activities and successes of Peninsula to an advantaged population and selective admissions, Fadiman set out to find other schools—public schools—with a similar orientation. She ultimately included in the film portraits of eight additional schools, scattered across the country. "Why Do These Kids Love School?" captures something of the essence of each individual school and identifies some characteristics common to all nine of them.

The film has racked up an amazing array of prizes, but for producer Dorothy Fadiman, who also wrote the script, it remains first and foremost an act of love. Fadiman, the mother of two adult children, has more than a touch of the counterculture and the flower child about her—with the enormous sensitivity and compassion of that era combined with its concern for the vulnerability of the young. There is also a spirituality about her, along with a great deal of intensity, commitment, and dedication. She set out to make a picture that would move and inspire as well as inform. The first question she asks of audiences when the lights go up after a screening is frequently surprising and disarming: "Did it bring tears to your eyes?" For an overwhelming number of viewers, the answer is yes.

Teachers are accustomed to portrayals of classrooms that make them cringe. Only rarely can professionals in the field find a non educator's understanding of teaching to be terribly penetrating or insightful. How did Fadiman manage it?

Part of the answer seems to lie in her own unusual capacity to learn. She listens and observes with total absorption—and acts on what she has learned. I will never forget my surprise when, months after our first conversation, I discovered that she had filmed almost every school that I had suggested to her. After the first version of the film was made and we had had several more conversations, she made changes that reflected the advice I and others had offered.

Critics share the enthusiasm of audiences for this film. Since its premiere in May 1990, "Why Do These Kids Love School?" has won a number of coveted awards—in national competitions involving thousands of entries, in one international film festival that drew submissions from 47 nations, in competitions limited to educational films, and in competitions involving a variety of areas. It took the 1990 award for best documentary in a San Francisco/San Jose competition (the Joeys). It took the blue ribbon at the 1991 American Film and Video Festival. It earned a Golden Eagle from the Council on International Non-theatrical Events (which means it will represent the U.S. in film festivals abroad), and it won a Silver Apple in the National Educational Film Festival.

Just one of the remarkable things about this film is the way it has been distributed. Since Fadiman produced it herself, with no sales organization behind her, she began distributing it from her home at below-cost prices. However, she was soon assisted by enthusiastic teachers across the country who volunteered to help with distribution within their areas. Today, the film has been purchased by a large number of schools and districts, and it has been bought and distributed by a number of regional organizations. In Hawaii, for example, the Honolulu chapter of the League of Women Voters is in the process of purchasing 50 copies for distribution to that city's elementary schools. The Iowa education department has sought funding to distribute the film in that state. And, after viewing the film, the *Kappan* editors asked me to write this article to inform their readers about the film.

One of the most unusual attributes of this film is the range of audiences to which it appeals. To mark the beginning of the school year, "Why Do These Kids Love School?" was shown on public television last fall for the second year in a row. It is widely used by parent and civic groups. But it is also used in courses that prepare teacher aides and other paraprofessionals, in teacher preparation courses, and even in courses that prepare experienced teachers to become supervisors. At the same time, the film has been used with youngsters in high school, in junior high, and in the elementary grades as a way of getting them to talk about their school experiences and what they would like them to be.

Just how does a film achieve such broad appeal? First, it tells the story of the Peninsula School, and it traces a Peninsula education from preschool to eighth-grade graduation. Classrooms and activities are shown at each age and grade level—beginning with a toddler's struggle to manage a hose and culminating in a young adolescent's tearful ambivalence about moving on to high school. The other schools portrayed carry the story of child-centered education into the high school. Altogether, the film runs for nearly an hour, though most viewers are surprised to discover that the time has passed so quickly.

Without the use of tedious labels, "Why Do These Kids Love School?" manages to convey something of significance about the educational process at each level. For instance, a scene in a first-grade science lab shows how observations lead to discovery and how children's ideas can be handled in ways that transmit important affective as well as cognitive messages. There is considerable emphasis throughout on schools, teachers, and parents as cultivators of human beings. Indeed, there is as much to do with the shaping of young lives as with the process of schooling .

It might even be said that this film reveals a powerful hidden curriculum. It evokes considerable thought about what schools are for and why we need them in the first place. In the admiring words of one reviewer, it offers "a gentle reminder that our educational priorities have gotten skewed somehow." Questions of educational mission and of the values we want schools to impart become for many viewers the center of the film. The film places considerable emphasis on freedom, but it also stresses the cooperation and creativity that freedom should yield. Autonomy is one theme, but so is building trust, community, and collaboration .

A second message that the film conveys is that good education is doable. The negative views of education that have characterized the past decade—and the circumstances that gave rise to them—have sometimes made it seem that we are incapable of offering education that is simultaneously effective, high in quality, equitable, and appealing. "Why Do These Kids Love School?" presents a countervailing (and heartening) point *of* view. The students and teachers in the nine schools it portrays are "turned on and tuned in."

Moreover, Fadiman was careful to include all kinds of student populations from all parts of the country. While she begins with a small, predominantly white and middle-class independent school, she also shows inner-city public schools whose students are largely minority youngsters from the working class or from the urban underclass. Classroom scenes and interviews were filmed in East Harlem, Minneapolis, and New Orleans, as well as in Lakewood, Colorado, Lowell and Cambridge, Massachusetts; and Jackson, Mississippi. They illustrate everything from carefully integrated curricula to a focus on individual learning styles and from cooperative learning to unusual roles for students, teachers, and parents.

What is particularly striking about the history of "Why Do These Kids Love School?" is the wide range of purposes for which it has proved effective. When she learned I was writing this article, Dorothy Fadiman wrote to a number of the people who had contacted her and asked them to share with me just how they have used the film. The array of responses was impressive. Here is a brief sampling. One school reported showing it to the school board 'to acquaint them with the mission and purpose of the school.' Others use it as a consciousness raising experience to stimulate awareness of the distance between the 'is' and the 'ought to be' and so to demonstrate a need for change. Still others use it for inspirational purposes to generate hope or to heal the wounds of disillusionment. One principal reported that he planned to show it annually to his teachers at the beginning of the school year to heighten dedication and commitment and to help them 'rekindle the essential spark.'

While it carefully avoids being didactic, the film nonetheless carried substantial freight. It urges child-centered education, considerable individual responsibility for learners, an emphasis on motivation, a personalized and supportive school environment, active engagement of learners with the material to be learned, the centrality of the human community, and a thorough interweaving of the affective, cognitive, and social aspects of development during the .school years.

By virtue of its rich demonstration of these and other educational principles, 'Why Do These Kids Love School?' has been used in a variety of professional courses, including classes on instructional methods, educational movements, methods of supervision, students at risk, theories of counseling, alternative education, and child and adolescent development. Even in areas for which the film has little direct application—e.g., school administration— its universal appeal seems to make it useful for sparking discussion of such matters as the kinds of roles played by the educators in the schools depicted, the kinds of scheduling arrangements that these schools require, and the kinds of school organization needed to support and sustain these learning environments.

The usefulness of the film to school administrators is suggested by Thomas Peters, of corporate excellence fame, in his introduction to the film. Peters points out that the schools depicted portray just the sorts of circumstances that 'make miracles' in any workplace. Workers are given the autonomy and responsibility to control their own operation, they are encouraged to collaborate with their peers, they are controlled more by a shared set of values and guiding principles than by rules and regulations, and they are made to feel like important and valued contributors to a significant enterprise. The schools depicted manage to establish these conditions for teachers as well as for students .

One reason why such organizational features are present in this group of schools is that all are alternative schools—which have been shown to differ substantially from other public schools with respect to their autonomy within the .system and the way in which they operate as organizations. But alternative schools also typically differ from traditional .schools in what they stand for educationally and in the pedagogy they employ. This is another feature of the film that makes its broad appeal so surprising: lately, alternative education has not had the endorsement of a great many educators in this country. It is not an educational orientation that a great many parents are demanding for their youngsters or that many reformers are urging for schools .

Yet if this film is any test—and I suspect it may be—the features of alternative education enjoy enormous appeal. On the one hand, that should not be entirely surprising, since a great many of these features are currently being urged separately as school improvement measures (e.g., cross-disciplinary study, downsizing, personalization, and learner engagement). On the other hand, it is certainly food for thought that a somewhat marginalized type of schooling should generate such positive response from professionals, parents, and the public.

'Why Do These Kids Love School?' has powerful lessons to teach, including the simple message that there are schools in this country 'where innovation is the norm, mutual respect is the standard, and children truly enjoy learning.' But even where its teachings are neither new nor novel, this film manages to present them in enormously attractive ways. My own calling prevents me from concluding that words are superfluous or unnecessary. But this film is a vivid reminder that there are often more direct and powerful ways of getting a point across. For example, a big part of the message of the film was articulated by an esteemed scholar and educational philosopher 30 years ago.

> The essence of the curriculum...consists not of objective lessons to he learned and courses to be passed, but of the scheme of values, ideals, or life goals which arc mediated through the materials of instruction. The really significant outcome of education is the set of governing commitments—the aims for living that the learner develops. The various subjects of study are simply means for the communication and appropriation of those values (Philip Phenix, *Education and the Common Good* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), p. 18).

Dorothy Fadiman's film reframes this message in ways that speak directly to the heart. It is, as one of the people who wrote to me put it, 'a beautiful statement on the power of education, the unlimited potential of children, and the importance of teachers."

MARYANNE RAYWID (Long Island New York Chapter) is a professor of education at Hofstra University, Hempstead, N.Y.

Reprinted from the *Kappan*, April, 1992

WHY DO THESE KIDS LOVE SCHOOL? $99.50
Call or send a check or money order to
PYRAMID FILM & VIDEO
P.O BOX 1048
SANTA MONICA, CA 90406
1-800-421-2304

ON A MORE SERIOUS NOTE:

Trauma of the Month Club
Heartbreak House
Tombstone, AZ

We color in the shadows of your life— for you.

Dear Mr. Fadiman,
The onset of cold, dreary winter weather is the perfect time to renew your membership in the Trauma of the Month Club. Only TMC can assure you of a steady supply of traumatic events every month, PLUS surprise, low cost bonus items.
Don't delay,

Yours Sincerely,
—Ima Lotta Sorrow
Membership Renewal Director

JAMES FADIMAN, PH.D.

Ima Lotta Sorrow
Trauma of the Month Club
Heartbreak House, Tombstone, AZ

Dear Ms. Sorrow,

In answer to your recent letter: rather than renew, I'm canceling my existing subscription for the following reasons:

1. You're losing your competitive edge. I've grown increasingly dissatisfied with the quality of your traumas. The June Main Selection, *Nightmares of Somalia,* was poorly designed, repetitive, and after the first few nights was hardly worth the screaming. And November's large box of Florida grapefruits and oranges, every one rotten in the center—clever, but lacking personal impact.

My original membership (plus bonus) had quality. In the first month, I flunked my licensing exam, got chicken pox, and lost my dog. I felt I'd come home. What's happened to that kind of service?

2. Your shipping department is unefficient. Twice last year I suffered trauma-free months. You can imagine how I felt when forced to remain silent in my support group, meeting after meeting, while everyone else wept and cursed about interesting

and unusual traumas. I was almost forced to give up my place to someone whose traumas were regular, timely and current.

3. You sold my name without permission to related organizations. Specifically I got advertisements from The Abused Child Gift Club and Destructive Relationships International. Even Typhoons of the Tropics has me on their list, as if bad weather is something I can't get cheaper locally.

Thanks, but no thanks.

—James Fadiman

Trauma of the Month Club
Heartbreak House
Tombstone, AZ

We color in the shadows of your life—for you.

Dear Mr. Fadiman,

We are proud of the work we do and we do not take your long running membership for granted. We stand by our guarantee: "High quality suffering for high quality people." After a careful review of our files we find that, indeed, you are due several traumas which were inadvertently mailed to someone with a similar name in your zip code area.

We recently upgraded our computer system (which caused a major trauma for us, and we don't use that word lightly). The problem has been corrected. Therefore, by the time you have received this letter, you should find that

1 . Rats are nesting in your family photo albums.
2. Your car has been stolen.
3. There is a leak in your bathroom dripping down inside the walls of your cellar.

As a way of apologizing for our inaccuracies, we've included a bonus. Your therapist has been accused of sexual harassment and will be unable to see you for at least two months while she spends time in court.

About the spoiled fruit. We've given you full credit for it. It was another computer error. The *Failed Fruit Box* was meant only for oveseas clients in drought-stricken countries.

Your name has been given to other lists. Most of our members get so little mail they even enjoy reading advertise-ments. However, per your request, we've struck your name from our trading roster. The only misery you'll be offered each month will be from our offices.

If you wish to extend your membership, we will send you, as a thank-you bonus, a member's pin tipped with an irritating substance so that whenever you wear it, it will cause a small rash.

Let's stay partners! Our service is for busy people, like you, who can't be expected to create all their own personal problems.

Your friend in dejection, depression and regret,
—Ima Lotta Sorrow

***James Fadiman** is a writer who lives in Menlo Park, CA. He does not share personal information about himself except with a professional or a support group (plus readers of the Association of Humanistic Psychology newsletter, who already know about him anyway —and readers of ΣΚΟΛΕ.* Write and we'll tell you all we know, in strictest confidence—but don't tell him we told you!).*

I added that! Actually, as both Jim and Dorothy (his wife, whose marvelous film, "Why Do These Kids Love School?" is the subject of the article immediately preceding this spoof, and who is a ΣΚΟΛΕ subscriber) undoubtedly already know, this is an item from the column entitled "Humoristic Psychology" in the AHP Newsletter. So don't tell **them, please, Jim and Dorothy! The devil made me do it! I never can resist a Pythonesque joke. Ain't this a doozy?*

And, on the same subject as Dorothy's film and Jim's spoof, but dealing with the adult life perspective shared by our educational system's alumni/ae, here's another article on the subject of trauma taken from the AHP Newsletter. One sometimes finds the borderline between tragedy and comedy becoming very blurred indeed! No, I'm not faulting the schools for creating these horrors directly but by ignoring the existence of this level of pain carried by the children in their classrooms!

WALKING WOUNDED: A WAY OF LIFE?

by Bennet Wong and Jock McKeen

Working with people over the years, we have encountered many horrifying stories of childhood trauma, from the blind outbursts of alcoholic parents to the pain of neglect and the ravages of early child sexual abuse. We have also worked closely with a number of individuals whose unfolding memories reveal episodes of repetitive ritualistic assaults. The degree of objectification of young lives is shocking. Many times, these people have tried to forget, to bury their previous pains with patterns of coping and withdrawal; they are often plagued by seemingly inexplicable fears, and a myriad of psychophysiological symptoms. It is in this state of current distress and disability that they seek the aid of professional counselors and other helpers.

As professionals, we can help to uncover early memories and provide safe, nutritive environments where people can learn to trust and care in an open, sharing atmosphere in the present. We can also help people express their pain and outrage in the present, in order to unlock the restrictions in themselves, physically and emotionally. We can provide a caring, supportive environment in which they can face their lives, put their history into perspective, and practice using underdeveloped wills.

Recognizing, treating and helping prevent childhood trauma has been an extremely important step in the helping professions. However, there is an insidious aspect of this development which we are not facing squarely. As we help people to reclaim earlier memories, and express previously repressed pains, it is very tempting for us to explain all of their current circumstances as caused by their earlier abuses—to rectify past wrongs with current caregiving. We become their champions and want to be their saviors.

It has become fashionable to talk of the "wounded child." It has become a way of life to be a "survivor," and an "adult child of (fill in the blank)." Early abuse is becoming an icon to be worshiped, a talisman to wear proudly as a testimonial to endurance and fortitude. Agencies and institutions have provided much support for this stance, and many well-intentioned caretakers are conspiring to keep clients fixated as helpless non-participants in earlier life activities. Unfortunately, for some people this fixation becomes the justification for complaining and wallowing in past pains rather than facing life in the present. Although we believe there is a respect for the self in finding one's sense of indignation and outrage, the self is diminished by blame and faultfinding.

Generally, these clients have not learned to relate in consistent boundaried ways. They did not learn to say "no," or to use their will to determine what they wanted. They often have shrunk back from life, tightened up in fear and denial, and are living restricted lives. These individuals can learn to take ownership of their feelings from the past, and move on into fuller lives.

Working with these victims involves sequential facilitation. At the beginning, the person needs support and help to uncover repressed material and feelings. This first "dependency stage" makes up for early childhood experiences that were missed. Then, when the person has some personal strength, and learns to experience dependability in relationships, (s)he can learn to move into the next stage of more mature relationships in the present. Often, the counselor is the first healthy relationship that this person has dared to have. Once a strong bond is made with the counselor, the person can make the next step—to extend newly found interactive skills into relationships with peers. What can impede this process, unfortunately, is the counselor, who often contributes to a prolonged dependency out of a need to be important. Rather than encourage gradual development in the present, we as counselors are tempted to keep these people weak and dependent to serve our own inadequades. Often, we are arrested at the same level as our clients, and gain false power by taking care of them, rather than facing our own fears of inadequacy. Many times we counselors have ourselves experienced similar traumas, and are prone to fuel the client's distress with our own. Instead of participating in mutual pity, we should be encouraging our clients to live in the present, and put the past into its place—as a memory. One young woman, who had endured early abuse and sexual violence wrote,

> I came to [the group] looking for someone or something to heal me. My turning point came one day when [the leaders] explained how we live in the future instead of the present when we live in hope. I realized with surprise that I was living in hope for the day I would be healed and could get on with my life. I decided I could let go of the idea of being healed, and live my life as it is today. I shared this with [one of the leaders], and he said, "Yes, and you don't even have to think of yourself as injured!" I suddenly understood! I'd never thought of myself as injured before all this—why did I think of myself as injured now? I'm the same person I was before I started remembering all this stuff! At that moment I stopped believing I was an injured victim waiting to be healed. I began to see myself once again as an intelligent, caring and competent woman.

She was amazed to discover "I'm not injured or flawed ... I'm whole." She had thought her life was doomed because of her early experiences, rather than seeing that she was now an adult who could make different choices with more authority than when she was young.

We cannot make up for someone else's past; nor can we undo it. We can hurt and rage with them, and help them to discover appropriate forms of expression in their current lives. The line of questioning should not be "How were you abused?" but rather "What did you experience?" The former question keeps the person stuck in moral strictures; the latter brings forth the individual's own experience, which often involves ambiguities of pleasure and coexisting pain. If some of the acts were pleasurable, the person might have repressed guilt feelings, which are being expressed in a variety of ways.

As another woman wrote,

> Attempting to access my anger over nine years of incest was sine qua non on my counselor's agenda from then on. Any positive feelings I shared about my father's enjoyment of my body, the nurture I had experienced in his warmth and cuddling, fell on deaf ears or were contradicted. My father was labeled aliminal who had "abused, molested and betrayed" his daughter. I remember

those words exactly, because I carried them on a flash card in my purse for several months. I found these indictments hard to swallow because they invalidated my feelings, distorted my reality. Instead of anger at my father, I became furious at my counselor.

Too often, we counselors leap to the conclusion that any current trouble is the expression of past abuse. Indeed, some people endured much violation; however, there does not seem to be a clear correlation between degree of abuse and degree of current difficulty. We now are poised to turn the therapeutic endeavor into a parody where every client thinks they have been abused; in this simulacrum, the counselor is certain that everything in the present is explained by past traumas. Without denying the seriousness of early abuse, we must not make the mistake of trying to witchhunt every vestige of the past.

This is not to excuse the inhuman violences of the past, nor deny the importance of the political and legal efforts in this area. However, we must go even farther and understand the importance of listening deeply to, instead of quickly labeling, people who are in danger of becoming lost or fixated in the concept of themselves as wounded children.

We want people to understand themselves, but not to rationalize current shortcomings because of past memories. Dealing with the pain and suffering of the past should not be a way of life, but a way to discover life.

Bennet Wong, M.D., F.R.C.P.(c) received his psychiatric training at the Menninger School of Psychiatry. Jock McKeen, M.D., Lic.Ac. (UK) studied at the College of Chinese Acupuncture, Oxford, England. They are the co-directors of PD Seminars in British Columbia, and recently co-authored A Manual For Life (PD Seminars, 1992).

Reprinted from the MARCH/APRIL 1993 AHP newsletter

PUSH-HANDS AND PARENTING

by Kate Kerman

In one of my earliest Tai Chi lessons, my teacher explained why he liked to teach not only the Tai Chi form, but "push-hands," in which two people work to push against each other until one or the other loses balance. He told us that push-hands was a much greater teacher than simply working on a solo form, since the effort of the other person to throw you off balance gave you a great deal more information about those places in your body which hold stiffness and resistance rather than being able to relax and let the pressure from the other player slide by or even be used to throw her off balance.

Biking home from that lesson, I had a flash of insight. To be a parent is to enter into a similar push-hands scenario. Our children and students are wonderful partners in teaching us our weak spots. Their instinct is infallible as they work vigorously to make sense of the world, to explore limits and boundaries. In their quest for growing up, they need to learn from both the strengths and weaknesses of the adults around them.

But this is not really an article about what children get out of their relationships with adults, but rather vice-versa. We all know that little children need adults in their lives, but it is easier to overlook the ways in which they are partners in our own journeys of self-discovery. Children make especially good partners for this self-discovery because they are so vigorous, so forgiving, so persistent.

What weak spots have my children and students helped me examine? I think the greatest one has been my instinct to control what is going on around me. Although it ought to be impossible for a mother to maintain the illusion that she can control her child's behavior past the first few weeks, most of us seem to be remarkably blind to the fact that our children are shaping our behavior at least as much as we shape theirs. I continue to get caught out on this issue over and over again.

Take the idea that we can forbid our children to have certain experiences—junk food, television, war toys, Nintendo, horror movies—you name it, we as parents have tried to limit their experiences. I am not talking about what we allow into our environment or what we choose to purchase—I feel fine about having refused to buy war toys for my son, about not having had a television for much of our family life, about choosing not to buy much sugary food. However, when I had only one thing to forbid my children, which happened to be sugar. I ultimately realized that I had in effect told them that sugar was a really important commodity. Their desire for it increased and they were willing to be sneaky, manipulative and dishonest about their consumption of sugar. When I stopped forbidding it, their consumption of it was more open and accessible to discussion. They were able to choose to buy candy without the extra strangeness of being sneaky about it. I found for myself as well that ending my attitude that sugar is 'bad' released me from silly self-guilt trips when I choose to eat it, which seems in general to have led to much less bingeing and to more honest enjoyment. Paying attention to my children's responses to my attempted control has in the long run brought me to a much saner place.

One thing I have learned along the way is that it is extremely helpful to notice when I am feeling uncomfortable and to look inside myself to find out why. Working with teenagers at The Meeting School on a twenty-four-hour-a-day basis is a grand way to learn about what makes me uncomfortable! And I have found out over and over again that it is fine to be uncomfortable, and to be honest about it. What isn't so effective is to be uncomfortable and to react in patterned and unconscious ways out of that discomfort. For instance, I often go on trips with nine to fourteen teenagers. At first, I would go into the grocery store with a bunch of people trailing me and making suggestions about what food to buy. This way lies insanity! I was often exhausted and annoyed when I got back in the van. At last I woke up to the fact that I was taking too much responsibility (control issues again) and that these people could work out their own system for buying food. Now I drive into a store parking lot, hand out the allotted money for the day, decree 'don't buy sugary stuff and BRING BACK A RECEIPT' and take a nap. The food isn't always exactly what I would choose, but I am relaxed and the students have had to deal with all those interesting interpersonal and economic issues raised by group shopping expeditions.

I used to let myself be talked into driving students places just because I couldn't think of a reason why I shouldn't. This often made me feel resentful—a clear sign that I had once again ignored my own feelings in order to be a 'good sport.' Besides wanting control, one of my weak spots is the desire to be liked, to be friendly even if it is at my own expense. Gradually over the years I have learned to call a complete halt to wheedling or to those elaborate explanations of why a trip to the bowling alley is so essential to someone's mental health. I have discovered these ploys to have the effect of drowning out my own internal sense of what I can or cannot handle. I tell students "don't give me a big song and dance, just tell me what you want and I'll see if I can help." Naturally, I have had to learn to do the same in return when presenting my needs, and to try to take "no" as gracefully as I wish they would.

I find more and more that if I can take the time to see why I am upset or concerned about a request for my time or attention that it opens up honest communication. There are times when I can be very spontaneous and hop in the car at a moment's notice. There are other times when I need to think things through or to flatly say no. What helps is to explain what is going on: "I am feeling flustered because everything is so disorganized today and I just can't make last-minute changes of plans," "I need to do housecleaning and I can't go unless you guys help out first," or "I don't feel comfortable taking you to Amherst because you came back stoned the last time I did that." If I can state clearly what is going on for me, my response is more often taken gracefully or the supplicant can come up with a solution to my discomfort (such as doing dishes for me before we go.)

Being a parent or teacher is an opportunity to heal old wounds, to grow, to retain a sense of wonder. It is also an opportunity to solidify, rigidify, act out of old hurts, or throw power around to make up for the powerlessness of our own childhood. To accept the opportunity for healing and growth, we must welcome the information about our weaknesses in the push-hands dances of our relationships with children.

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AN EXCERPT FROM:

THE END OF EVOLUTION
by Joseph Chilton Pearce
Chapter 15, Cycle of Competence

Mechanical excellence is the vehicle for genius.
—WILLIAM BLAKE

Nature's agenda for us is to learn procedures, so we can participate in the creative process. Products, such as information, answers, thoughts, and things are cheap; process is priceless. People with I.Q.'s of 25 can give infallible answers and voluminous information. In reversibility thinking, considered by Jean Piaget to be the highest level of intellect, we solve a problem only to retrace our steps to see how we arrived at that solution. Then we can 'abstract' that ability from its original context and apply it to a wide variety of new situations. The actual solution is incidental to learning the process, as when an infant grasps for an object; gaining the object The stimulus is secondary to learning how to grasp.

Most learning, deliberate or not, follows a threefold 'cycle of competence.' Observed by Greenfield and Tronick at Harvard's Center for Cognitive Studies many years ago, this cycle seems more significant then ever, in light of the triune nature of our brain. The cycle involves: (1) roughing in, (2) relating and filling in, and (3) practice and variation (Bruner, 1971). I In our earliest years this cycle is an entrainment that demands every bit of attention. An entrainment is a sequence that unfolds in lock-step fashion, one step leading to the next. We speak of being 'embedded' in an entrainment until it completes itself, since it leaves no room for a separate awareness. We can't even process other sensory information when an entrainment is in force (as when, absorbed in writing, I sit oblivious to the smoke from the supper I promised my wife I'd watch). Once the cycle of competence has run its threefold course, our self-awareness becomes general again and can attend to other stimuli.

Indications are that our personal-self represents only 5 to 10 percent of our total consciousness. As a free-floating point of attention, our self can act like a super target-cell to activate any of the intelligences and abilities available. A mature self-system can embed in an activity, allowing 100 percent of one's energy to be applied, or, equally, can dis-embed completely from an engagement and move on. A fragmented self remains partially embedded in various systems, unable to fully detach from any of them, and so, is unable to fully integrate its energies into a single entrainment.

The toddler can embed and entrain as nature intended. For instance, the first time a little girl notices her mother open the kitchen cabinet, she goes over to one of these doors, grasps the handle, and pulls as her mother did. The magnetic latch may give and she might fall back, but she gets up and sees that the door is open. She pushes the door closed, grasps the handle and pulls again, keeping her balance this time; again it opens. The light dawns, understanding appears as the roughed-in form is filled in with actual content. Here is how mother does it. Previous neural fields handling similar complex movements start to interact and link up; new neural fields rush into service, filling in the bits and pieces that complete the pattern.

The next stage follows immediately, practice. She begins to open and close that door over and over again with exuberant abandon. After an interminable period of this noisy business, there is sufficient myelination* for the several millions of neural connections involved in this total body-mind action to function with the minimum expenditure of energy. This frees the toddler's consciousness from the entrainment, and she can abandon this arena of conquest and look for new worlds to conquer. The critical variation period begins. She notices other doors and repeats the performance on each, spending hours at this. Aware of and enjoying her new-found ability, she plays with it as one would a piano.

Until that practice stage was completed, the toddler was not aware of herself performing the new action, she was that action. She was only aware as the action, not of it. Her entrainment was so complete that no conscious energy was left over for self-awareness. Only through completing the initial entrainment can she stand back from it, look at it objectively, see what she has done, and apply her learning somewhere else. This is the foundation of reversibility thinking and all further development and applies to us at age seventy as well as seven.

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*Note: Myelination: the sheathing of neuronal axons through frequent use which allow them to survive puberty. Non-myelinated neuronal fields will disappear at puberty—up to as much as 80% of brain mass—and a semantic process involving the grasp of abstraction, causal thinking and the use of intellect gets under way via the neocortex. But this huge neural loss is largely culturally induced, through denying the child of our industrialized countries opportunities to entrain and practice more concrete learnings, the neural fields thus engendered whereby would thus become myelinated and would then survive puberty (Editorial paraphrasing taken from J.C. Pearce).

When this sensory-motor phase of the cycle is completed, a higher entrainment takes over, impelling her to extract the new ability out of the context that gave rise to it and vary that learning. She will correlate that situation with other contexts and expand the stable neural fields she has just formed with each new variation. We could say she "stands in" her neocortex and examines what those lower systems can now do under her direction. She looks around for something "doorish" enough to be compatible to her new field of potential, yet variable enough to furnish novel stimuli that will enlarge that new field.

Continued repetition without variation would lead to habituation and prematurely close the cycle. Habituation happens when there is no novelty and a neural pattern-tape loops. It is turned over to the R-system,* which can handle that single pattern but without variation. This is nature's economy, but if the R-system takes over too soon, expansion into new relations stops. Since the episode of that single door: by itself, would make for an incomplete learning, the neocortex keeps the ball rolling with its novelty factor.

It is a neat cycle, and variation is the key, when its time comes. Variation disturbs the patterns established by forcing them to accommodate to new possibilities, and this strengthens those patterns. My muscles are all very comfortable and undisturbed, sitting here in my cushy chair. But they will never match those seen in the health magazines if I leave them so comfortable. The word *comfort* comes from the Latin words for *with* and *strength* and originally meant operating from a position of power —different from what it has deteriorated to mean today: to avoid all action and "flake out." Ilya Prigogine claims perturbation or disequilibrium is necessary for learning and growth. A smug, satisfied system goes static. Marian Diamond points out that the brain stays flexible and powerful all our life if sufficiently challenged. Habituation is the enemy of growth. Perturbation, or disturbance of established patterns, overcomes the tendency toward this inertia. The minute we establish a pattern we would rest in it, were this variation impulse not built into the cycle.

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* Note: "R-system" is another name for the "reptilian" or primitive brain, the functions of which are concerned with all sensory-motor functions, all physical processes that keep us in contact with our world—in other words, with primitive physical survival (Also paraphrased from Pearce).

The dynamic between our reptilian and mammalian systems tends toward habituation and will avoid novelty since those limbic-R-system dynamics are not built to handle novelty. The dynamic between our emotional and intellectual brains, however, impels us toward novelty. Our constant tension between our lower and higher natures is partly this tension between new and ancient neural structures, between avoiding and seeking novelty, between equilibrium and disequilibrium. Even when we choose novelty, we want to rest at each achieved point and habituate the novel state. The highest point of life may be to live in a state of pure flow, a "now-state" without past or future, in which prediction and control are not factors—a state of continual, instantly-instant adaptation to the unknown, which is just about as far beyond the reptilian state as one can imagine. This is the state the active, learning child actually lives in by default; we habituate later, and what we must recapture in spiritual development.

In our toddler's variation stage, any possibility for variation now becomes the stimuli. Once ability is gained it can increase. This keeps the fields of potential seeking out new relations and compatibilities. The increase must follow on the heels of the initial learning, while the entrainment is in effect. Myelination will now take place between categories of experience, between related neural networks. Now the new field of potential assumes some autonomy, as though it were an independent intelligence, and seeks out all areas of compatibility in the environment. Some correlations our toddler makes will be clearly compatible, others less so, as she extends to quite different forms of doors—a variety of hinged objects, the potty seat, the lid to the music box—then to tops or coverings in general, such as box tops and jar tops. The initial category, once formed, continually expands as the dynamic broadens; subcategories form and relate, and so on.

Consider a common variation on the above scenario, however. In the midst of this all-encompassing practice period, while the entraining toddler is banging away on the door, getting that myelin going, the phone rings. Mother says: "Stop that, dear, I can't hear." The child doesn't even slow down. Mother shouts, "Stop this instant, *I* am on the *telephone!*" But not a flicker of response. Bang, bang. Mother puts down the phone, rushes over in a rage, picks the toddler up, and smacks her hand. "When will you learn to mind me?" shouts mother, putting the shrieking toddler down and returning to the phone.

The toddler didn't respond to her mother's request because an entrainment leaves no energy for processing other forms of information. She literally didn't hear her mother. Having her hand smacked simply breaks the entrainment as a non-sequitur, an illogical interruption of an instinctual, hard-wired response. The learning is now canceled and she will have to begin all over again, more or less. The problem is that, after a few such interferences, the child learns that following the hard-wired entrainment of learning can lead to disaster, a no-win situation that strains the parent bond (a major fear of childhood). Confidence is the essence of intelligence. *Confidence* means 'with faith.' Faith in one's self is built in; fearfulness and timidity, being counterproductive, must be learned. After a few episodes of reprimands and conflicting parental demands that break the child's learning entrainment, she must, of necessity, split her attention between the learning at hand and the environment at large, since that environment has become a source of unpredictable fear and pain. From that point on, the toddler will have one eye on the 'door' or whatever the learning target is, and the other on her parent, or, later, teacher, lest she suddenly get smacked (for no reason she can comprehend). A learning cycle gets 50 percent of her energy at best, the defense mechanisms get 50 percent, and learning becomes a halfway, divided effort. Most of us grow up split in this way. 'I can't seem to concentrate' we say, and, indeed, we can't. We can't trust our world enough to entrain on anything. We can't put 100 percent of our consciousness into any action, since that would leave nothing left over for our defense system. Thus we are scattered and fragmented between what we are trying to learn and our feelings of anxiety.

So a good learning environment for children must be safe and free of reprimands, fear, and pain, and one in which stimuli to initiate cycles of learning are provided and the children are allowed to complete those cycles.[1]

Estimates are that 95 percent of all learning takes place below our awareness. The pregnant mother just carries on her speech as usual, and this activates the infant's built-in, hard-wired speech pattern. You can't stop children from learning to speak if they hear people talk. The same is true of many intelligences. Surprisingly little learning takes place from willful, forced attempts to make a child learn. Just provide a child with the appropriate environment—one with acceptance, love, protection, and appropriate stimuli—and you can't prevent the brain from learning. Learning is what it's designed to do.

Our toddler, still trying to gain some control over those ungainly muscles and limbs, is not available for a discussion of quantum physics or evolution. Similarly, the adult still locked into a bodyworld identity and low-level defense postures is not available for a discussion of the evolution of spirit. A scientist, locked into and identified with a reality consistent with his electronic-physical devices in the laboratory, can hardly be blamed for a lack of enthusiasm over my reports of a unity-state of consciousness or meditation experience.

My meditation teacher said 'You can never really occupy this body until you can move beyond it.' Examined in the light of learning in general, 'moving beyond the body' is the logical conclusion to the lengthy process that occupies our childhood: discovering and learning to use our physical bodies in the larger body of the world. William Blake commented that mechanical excellence was the vehicle of genius. You can't get into the music, a great pianist said, until you can get beyond the notes. Through mechanical excellence in a subject we rise beyond it and can play with it creatively. Thus, nature's goal for us seems to be dominion over the creative process itself. This may be an audacious suggestion, since it means moving beyond creation itself, but it follows logically from the cycle of competence nature has arranged for us.

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1. Grace Pilon's magnificent 'Workshop Way'; Rudolph Steiner's Waldorf Schools; genuine Montessori schools; that extraordinary Blue Rock School in Nyack, NY; and the Sudbury Valley School in Massachusetts are examples of ideal learning environments. Their examples could so easily be employed throughout our nation—at a vast saving of money and minds.

REFERENCES

Education Through Music (ETM), Richards Institute, 149 Corte Madera Road, Portola Valley, CA 94025, or P.O. Box 6249, Bozeman, MT 597716249. In Canada: G. McGeorge, Box 1240, Chatham, Ontario, Canada.

Waldorf School, Waldorf Institute of Spring Valley, Hungry Hollow Road, Spring Valley, NY 10977.

Rudolph Steiner College, 9200 Fair Oaks Blvd., Fair Oaks, CA 95628.

Workshop Way, Xavier University of Louisiana, 7325 Palmetto Street, Box 144C, New Orleans, LA 70125.

Oakmeadow School (Homeschooling), P.O. Box 712, Blackburg, VA 24063; telephone: 703 552-3263.

Blue Rock School, P.O Box 722, West Nyack, NY 10994.

* * *

Pearce cites our five most damaging practices commonly accepted as normal which seriously interfere with nature's evolutionary plan for humanity as *hospital childbirth, daycare, television, premature attempts at formal education* and *synthetic hormones* used in our meat and dairy foods.

* * *

"We are evolution's end, what she was after, her summation."

—Joseph Chilton Pearce

"A compelling thesis on the evolution of human intelligence. Going beyond his well-known previous works, *The Crack in the Cosmic Egg* and *Magical Child*, [Pearce] describes how we are the product of evolution. According to Pearce, our future is in the ever-present NOW ... If [he] is right, then despite the current challenges we face as a species and as a living planet, there is a light at the end of the tunnel and that light is within us!"

—Menas Kafatos, author of *Looking In, Seeing Out* and *The Conscious Universe*.

"Joseph Pearce's deep concern for the welfare of children shines through in this book. Parents, teachers and others who work with and for youth will find much in this book they can take to heart for bettering the lives of children."

—Thomas Armstrong, author of *In Their Own Way* and *Awakening Your Child's Natural Genius*.

Pearce's precedent-setting new book, *Evolution's End: Claiming the Potential of our Intelligence*, is available in hard cover for $20 ($26.75 in Canada, £12.99 in the U.K.) from HarperSanFrancisco, ISBN 0-06-250693-5. Let's pray for its publication in paperback soon!

SECOND BERKSHIRE LIVE-OUT SUMMER CONFERENCE:

Dormouse therapy

LETTERS TO EACH OTHER:

The Tenniel cartoon above is the logo we used at a week-long summer conference we called "The Second Berkshire Live-out," which took place last July at an old farmhouse (built in 1796) high in the foothills of the Berkshires in Ashfield, Massachusetts.

Sixty-two people registered, and people came and went throughout the week, staying as long as they had the time or desire, sitting in on conversations they had particularly wanted to take part in with one or more of the educational leaders who had offered us their time and talent during that week.

John Gatto, Jerry Mintz, Elizabeth Quigley, Mabel Dennison, Pat Farenga, Jon Scott, Ron Miller, Katharine Houk and Seth Rockmuller, and the staff of The Free School in Albany, New York, all participated as invited discussants, but actually, as you can see from the following letters, poems, essays, we all just jumped in together... and I must say, the water was fine! We will try for a mid-February gathering there if we can solve the heating problem—and next July for sure—so set the time aside now! It's only $5/day/person!

This is a sort of windup letter to everyone who responded to the invitation to come to the Live-out, whether or not you

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actually made it! Because, whether you realize it or not, you were - and are—a member of the gang, by simply having opted to come in the first place. I say that, because we will be having more of these gatherings, probably sooner than any of us had planned, and we want you to know you are more than welcome to come - you are expected! First I guess, in priority terms, come the letters of the people who made it. Reading them will give everyone a remarkable window into both the time we have spent together and the orientation of each of the writers. So—in the alphabetical order of their first names—here they are! As more come in, I'll add them in, and will add a kind of attempted summary of my own at the end. M., ed.

Arthur (Woodcock):

I can't keep to myself any longer my wonderful experience at the 2nd Berkshire Live-out!—For once I was exposed to the active, fertile minds of people really wanting to do something about healthily educating our children (and doing it) for enough time to really exchange and share our ideas, wishes and experiences in sufficient depth to have come away saying, 'That is just what I wanted.' Close quarters, unlimited dialogue with the likes of John Gatto, Pat Farenga, Jerry Mintz, etc., is the realization of the dream of every conference goer/workshop groupie and the fuse that lights the fire within me, to work harder with an enhanced promise of success.

Betsy (Mercogliano):

JUICE-BEARERS

We've been juice bearers this week
Coming together on dry, parched, Berkshire soil,
Thirsty for rain, deep and replenishing.
Together we have brought on the juiciness of this place -
Enlivening this phoenix homestead
With our despairs and successes, hopes and dreams,
Watering each other's inner gardens as the land drank in
the rain
And rain,
And rain.
This quenching has come not with soft sweet spring
showers,
But moved in on us each day with summer's sweat,

Earth-shuddering thunder and the illuminating of lightning,
Flashing behind loaded clouds.
After each storm session, the release was tangible,
The new energy working to open new thoughts, new risks,
Ripening the berries, swelling with juice.
Each evening, the sweetness came,
The lyrical song of the hermit thrush duet,
The belly laughs together over Monty Python, home videos or
Theodora's parading fashions,
Then the soft communion of sunset and sleepiness.

We have been juice bearers for each other, ourselves and this tangle of cares.
The thunder of caring for truth in action rolled through us,
Pouring lushness into this gathering.
It has given us quarts of berries to ripen in the days to follow.

I loved the flow of thought and need for action, the pulsing from a somewhat pessimistic national picture to the powerful optimism of personal pictures of what is working. I loved the pulsating of the 'polarities'—the men's view, the women's view, the cerebral and the brass-tacks tactics, the historical awareness and today's realities. I have two wishes—that the presenters overlap with each other more and that they stay for at least one whole day and a night—the late night exchanges or the talks over breakfast were great as a chance to round-out getting to know each other. What a rich beginning! I again see the picture with the caption, 'Build it and they will come.'

Charlene (Therrien):

This week at Journey's End farm in the Berkshires was, among other things, an exercise in alternative education and communal living. Funny thing about that. I found this to be both exciting and scary; another step in the direction of my life toward letting go of control. And yet relinquishing the tendency to want to call the shots about all of the little details of life puts me in a position to be with myself more and be better able to respond to whatever is happening inside; thoughts, feelings, inspirations.

It was pure joy to have the opportunity to talk things through, often relieved of the usual constricting duties and distractions of my life. I got to hear and learn about such a variety of ways of being, doing and thinking that judgments as to rightness and wrongness often gave way to a wondrous appreciation of the beauty and breadth of the spectrum of creative possibilities. We need only get out of the way.

Many voices spoke this thought during the course of the week. I left on Saturday, again with some trepidation as well as excitement about what it would all mean in my life; what would this new light shine upon and how would I respond? How would my response or lack thereof mesh or conflict with the responses of others around me? I don't know. But I do know that I am fortunate to be returning home to community and family, most of whom were with me on this week-long exploration. The stretching that I did took place, if not at home, at least within the context of my 'family' structure. Wow! Perhaps, with that and the support which that context affords, I can allow myself to travel a bit lighter so that I can get out of the way more easily.

Chris (Mercogliano):

Shabbat Shalom! It's a cool, crystalline Berkshire morning... a good time to reflect back on this amazing week...

It feels to me like there's been an internal rhythm at play right along here; people coming and going, rain alternating with sun, play and laughter ebbing to seriousness, sometimes conflict, and quickly flowing back again, and sumptuous feasts appearing at just the right moments. We have been an extended family, in more ways than one with three generations of Leues joined in together at times; we were not really tribal, just increasingly related with each passing day. I think Peck would declare that we achieved the status of 'temporary community,' and some fine, hard work and courageous risk-taking went into that development. If some stroke of fate had caused us all to remain here and throw in our lots together, it seems to me that we had the makings of a strong ongoing community as well. Everyone has made important contributions—from youngest to oldest and all in between.

I came last Sunday feeling excited and challenged at the thought of the unknowns involved in this experiment. And it's been both exciting and challenging in any number of ways. On the one hand, I have loved the easy-going pace and the practical informality of this Live Out, and on the other hand, I found myself confronted with my own inner passivity. There was no larger structure to give up responsibility to, no big room to become anonymous in, and nowhere to hide. Solitary walks in the woods only brought me face to face with myself. Isn't that all there is, anyway?... being face to face with ourselves and then with our 'selves' in other people? Fit God in there wherever it feels comfortable. At any rate, this experience has been entirely 'co-created,' and my self-assessment is mixed. There were times when I held up my end of the bargain, and there were times when I didn't. I can say that I was generally aware of the challenge throughout.

I also arrived grateful for the opportunity to live amidst the beauty that abounds in this place, and I've not squandered that delight one bit. I definitely feel healthier, more energetic, and generally more at peace with myself than before I came. Along the way, I've learned a great deal of important ideas and information, some new and some not so new, (sometimes it's the timing and/or the context in which one encounters a new idea or concept that determines whether or not one truly integrates it), I've made some new friends, I've been inspired repeatedly, and know that I will bring that inspiration home and begin putting it into practice. Elizabeth Quigley's concluding insistence that we think positively in the face of all that we know is wrong, and that we focus instead on what we can do to create change around us is certainly the right note for me to end on.

Reading the autobiography of the former LA gang member that Elizabeth is supporting has given me much sobering food for thought, and brings to mind my only critical thought so far about the Live Out - that there were, with the exception of Little Paul, no people of color joining in with us this week. Sanyika Shakur concludes his shocking autobio with his personal belief that separation is the only answer to racism and the institutionalized oppression of 'minority' peoples in this country. I hope he's wrong about that, that his conclusion reflects both the horror of his present condition (month after month of abject solitary confinement with no prospect of relief) and the inexorable racism that he was subject to throughout his 'childhood,' but at this point I can only hope. Again, I am thankful for the hope and optimism that I will be bringing home with me tomorrow.

Connie (Frisbee-Houde):

What a great space for openness and sharing, hearing and learning. I was here Monday , left and returned on Friday. I had a powerful reaction Monday that is important to me to share. To share how the process went for me. At one point, as John Gatto in particular was talking about the history of the development of education and all those facts that are not told that he has searched out, and Mary was trying to interject her information concerning the role women had in carrying out the males' ideas, I felt the need to just leave the room. I left the house and walked into the woods and burst into tears. The pine forest and the Great Mother held me as the birds sang to me.

In time, I began to feel the peacefulness of the woods and I felt that I could return to the discussion. When I returned to the farm house I felt more able to listen and this time participate. This I think is the key for me. What was happening previously was that the situation was stimulating my negative educational experience where I often felt that I had to just understand everything that was being told to me. I was not to question. I was not to have my own thoughts much less feelings. The biggest message was that I was supposed to understand it all; otherwise I was stupid.

It was only after going back home and telling Frank about the day that I began to put these ideas together. My thoughts also became clearer when I returned on Friday to experience a whole different and more positive point of view in listening to Elizabeth Quigley talk about Middle Earth (her school). I think that I had been picking up on some of the despair John feels about the educational system.

Some of the difference I also attribute to the female energy in what was being said on Friday. The 'get in there and do something - don't just talk and theorize' attitude. There is a place for both and a joining together of it all that is very important to the whole picture and what was being created at the Live Out. However, one without the other is not a whole.

I am so glad to have shared the experience and don't plan to miss any in the future.

Coyote:

Thursday, July 29, 1993

Dear Albany Free School & Berkshire Live-Out Friends —

Here's my contribution & Thank You! for being able to participate in the Gathering.

* If Educate means to LEAD FORTH, then is our own EXAMPLE perhaps the most important thing we offer others?

* EXEMPLAR OF WHAT? Sustainable, Earth-gentle living?

Attunement & Honor & Praise of spirit? Love, joy, gentleness, humaneness weaving through all our attitudes, words, ways? Nurturing & uplifting strong wholesome Family at every turn? Healthy choices in all we intake to belly, skin, eyes, ears, senses? Stretching & growing to the max in our own lives... honestly facing & moving through blind spots & baggage? Keeping keenly attuned to exemplars of our highest ideals, appreciating & empowering them, and both watching and asking, '*HOW DO YOU DO IT!*'? Being VERY savvy about what pulls us down from our ideals of honoring & nurturing earth, spirit, family, wholesome-ness, humaneness? (And sidestepping such downers as much as possible?) Embracing ALL facets of what it means to be fully human? (Spirit infused/sensual/Earthy/...)

• In a nutshell, do we make it our business to Walk our talk? And to commend & learn from others who walk our talk, perhaps better than we ourselves? To me, this is a given. Do you agree?

• Put another way: MANY people made a point of speaking to me personally about wonderful qualities they see in Mark. I'm interested to know whether anyone made it their business to WATCH Mark or me, or to ASK either of us, 'HOW DO YOU DO IT!'

• Did anybody figure out what I forgot to say? My presentation was not only my best response to concerns I heard expressed about 'Male Currency' but I am in the awkward & delicate position of being a product of this system I am so distressed about & am so eager to disengage from. It was also my best effort to respond to what I hope was the unspoken question: 'Tell me as much as possible about the specifics of how you've led & nurtured & unschooled Mark to help him be so amazingly straight, sparkly, loving, light.'

What I shared was, to me, the specifics I've done my best to consistently aim for in parenting/empowering Mark. I'm glad to share more with anyone who's interested. And I'll leave you with 2 tidbits that have been among the most compelling guideposts in my Journeywork with myself and Mark.

• When I was hovering about whether to stay 'on the grid' (circa 1976), it occurred to me to try out the seemingly outrageous assumption, I CAN GET BY ON NO CASH! Thus: HOW WOULD 'Mama Nature/another Animal/an Indigenous Person' DO THIS?

Testing out that idea led to many breathtaking insights & fresh perspectives. Wow! (Not to mention MAJOR lifestyle changes.)

• When Mark, then mira, was 5 weeks old, (circa 1979), the seemingly outrageous idea came to me

I DON'T EVER WANT TO PRESUME TO TRY TO TEACH YOU ANYTHING UNTIL I DISCOVER WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW.

Divesting myself of the role of Teacher & of Professional, relative to my child (and hopefully to all) was a gigantic CAN opener for my self, my child, my life.

I invite all who read this to sample this Food For Thought, by trying out these Giant Can Openers in your lives. Do be prepared for some Roller Coaster Rides... the effect can be akin to Taking a Tiger by the Tail. To me such T.T.T. Adventures are likely what's needed if we're to be successful in our efforts to Turn The Tide of a rampantly oppressive, high-fog societal Framework. Long Live T.T.T.!

My Very best to all. Thanks for listening.

Coyote
Healing Grace Sanctuary LE-3
Shelburne Falls MA 01370

David (Madeira):

DEAR MARY AND EVERYBODY,

I AM MISSING MY PILLOW. IF YOU FIND IT PLEASE WRITE TO ME, DAVID HAHNE, AT 2153B HOUTMAN RD., SAUGERTIES, NY 12477. THANK YOU FOR A VERY NICE TIME.
P.S. MY PILLOW IS A FAT WHITE ONE WITH SILVER STRIPES AND NO PILLOWCASE.

(David is nine years old)

Elizabeth (Quigley):

To Everybody from the Free School Community:

Thank you for creating the wonderful environment into which we were enfolded so warmly. I *love* having the opportunity to talk about Middle Earth, and alternatives in education. It is great to receive feedback that says, 'Right on, Quig!' Please consider coming to Middle Earth to see any time!!

Keep on truckin' -

And also from Elizabeth:

AN OPEN LETTER TO SANYIKA SHAKUR

Aug. 2, 1993

I am writing to tell you about the weekend up in Massachusetts with the folks from the Free School in Albany (remember the article I sent written by a Japanese student about her host school?). I have also enclosed some additional background information about the school and its attendant business, living arrangements, etc. I know you will find it fascinating because of your interest in creating new kinds of community living situations.

Marilyn and I arrived at the Leue farm in a thunder and lightning storm. I was very tired since I worked at Mathom House till nine the night before and was on the road by 5:30. I wasn't really ready to deal with putting up the tent in the rain, and suggested to M. that we must go to a motel, but she came through for me. We waited out the storm and she practically threw up that tent in a matter of minutes. All I did was follow her directions and hammer in a few stakes. She assembled the outrigging and with one lift we had a really nice private room. It is a big tent! We each had a bedroll with foam underpads—which don't work for sh*/%$ because my hips were killing me for days later from sleeping on the ground). In the middle of the tent we put an old oriental rug. We both had a beach chair, there was a boom box for Marilyn's new age music, and a lantern for reading. What more could one ask? The rain never bothered us, and we kept that tent zipped tight because the mosquitoes were the size of hummingbirds! We were very comfortable.

I had signed on for deep conversation about education and forgot that any time you get out in the country, you also get deep living. I took a walk around the house with little Debbie (who told me that she preferred to be called Devorah—about which her mother said, "She did? I never heard about that before."—Kids always have a secret, fantasy life of which their parents know nothing!). During our walk, which was so slow and easy that we only covered part of the yard and part of the apple orchard, yet we saw several garden snakes, a wonderful stone bird bath, Indian paintbrushes, a kind of flower I have never seen in PA, but which were prolific in upstate NY when I grew up, and all kinds of other flowers: Queen Anne's Lace, Black Eyed Susans, Buttercups. Don't they have wonderful names? I could feel the morning heat warming and drying the night moisture on the tent, and warming and slowing me down—deep living!

You can see the house where the meetings took place, and the yards around it in the enclosed pictures. The shot of M. and I in the woods was on top of the hill where the apple orchard was located, and where we pitched the tent. It really is an ideal location for a conference center, which is what Mary Leue intends it to be. We took our meals with all the others in the house, sharing food and preparation tasks. We ate wonderful homemade breads and all kinds of good things. Cleanup was easy—I watched the kids—they, and everybody else, washed their own dishes!

On Friday morning, we assembled in the living room for a council meeting. It was an opportunity for M. and I, and a couple other people who were not associated with the Free School, to see the process that they use for resolving conflict, finding creative solutions to problems, and deepening their connection to one another through sharing thoughts and feelings. The process is loosely based on a number of interactive, psychologically based theories including Jungian psychology, transactional analysis, past lives therapy, etc. It was very interesting and I was impressed with Mary Leue's skill as a facilitator—maybe that only means we got to lunch on time!), but it felt very comfortable. Maybe I felt comfortable with it because it is similar to what we do, although for a shorter period of time, every day at Middle Earth. By focusing on the day and self-assessing, ventilating and seeking solutions collectively, we strengthen our bond with each other and make life a little easier.

After lunch, we reconvened (they asked me to sit in the *guru* chair just as I was headed, for my own reasons, to the lowest chair in the circle! So I invoked Neem Karoli and truly asked him to guide the process). They ran a video tape (M. suggested that I request a copy but I don't know if I could stand to watch myself). I said that I had four objectives or areas for discussion: Middle Earth, PA Alternative Educators' Association, the International Affiliation of Alternative Schools and Personnel's Boulder conference, and Sanyika Shakur. I had four weeds I held in my hand to represent and remind me of each of those areas. I know what you're thinking, Sanyika. Country philosopher, right?

I know you know, from our voluminous correspondence, that although I am in total despair over the political/educational processes in this country, I feel I must behave as though I am optimistic and that what I do will make a difference. I believe that I am then operating from a spiritual grounding, Gandhian in nature. It was very gratifying to me that several people from the

Free School related to that. They spoke of being encouraged by me to make what changes that they can. While one may not overcome all despair by doing so, after years, one can say, 'There I made a difference. That child felt the impact of my help. It mattered that I did thus and such.'

My narration about what works at Middle Earth for delinquent adolescents confirmed for people at the Free School that the practices that they use with primary/elementary students also works with adolescents. A democratic authority style, one which encourages, even demands personal responsibility, is, we agreed, the best thing that we can do for any child. I encouraged them to consider joining the International Affiliation of Alternative Schools, and related how I based PA Alt Ed Association on the same premise: no dues, but a philosophy of volunteerism. That way it is the personal responsibility of each member to contribute to the association's on-going progress (and you don't have people sitting in their offices writing me checks for $10., and passing with the green, the responsibility for getting the message of alternative education onto someone else). The value of an involved community of concerned and involved educators, parents and citizens is clear and it is necessary that we communally take responsibility for the education of all our children.

Finally, in the conversation that followed I gave the listeners a charge: to do what they can to be more aware of the immediate educational needs of children and to take the challenge of starting from where they are. I included in that charge a special plea: that as educators they have an additional responsibility to combat racism. I then introduced you, told a little about our correspondence, and passed around the circle your book and the articles from Harper's, the LA Times, and Prison Life. I also shared the Pelican Bay article. You would be gratified by their interested responses. You are achieving one of your goals, Sanyika, for conscious people like these educators, are deeply disturbed and concerned by your story. They seemed to feel as I do that educators in your childhood missed their opportunity to make a difference in the life of that little 11-year-old who got dumped into the gang. Anyway, that is a vital first step, to raise awareness of the problem. What's the next step, Sanyika? None of us can agree with your premise that separatism is a solution. On a personal basis alone, we are not willing to lose so many good people. It also concerns me that it would involve a colonization of somebody's home. How can that be justified? Your turn to be charged, my friend. What's the next step for people like us? We are willing to try to meet the challenge (and I am ready to spread the word!).

I feel so fortunate to have met so many good and really intriguing people. Chris is one of the few men I know who work professionally with preschool children. It was very interesting to hear him relate some of his experiences with those children. He read his poem 'Mumasatou' at the Friday night talent show. I was planning on sending you a copy after I heard it, but he wondered if you would like a copy. You may have already heard from him (he's seated at the kitchen table in the picture). He was totally mesmerized by your book and read it all while I was there. He has been part of a men's group practicing Native American rituals and he said he would write of that to you. I know from our discussion of Iron John you will find his comments engrossing. You will find his comments on the Live Out in the reaction paper I copied and enclosed for you. I must admit that I don't feel that I must have done justice to you when I read the line Chris wrote about me 'supporting you'. I must not have made it clear to everybody, but they will hopefully read this, that I have been greatly supported by you from your first letter telling me to continue 'the struggle' to your continued careful reading of my own proprioceptive process writing. It has been better than keeping a journal over this past year because I get such wonderful feedback from you on my ramblings.

Betsy, Chris' wife, a teacher and midwife, was distraught over the lack of due process at Pelican Bay and by the fact that she, (who is probably usually well informed on political issues), did not have any idea that such practices occurred. Who did? Not in the white bread community in which I have lived. Another example, I know, of a rather racist bent to our field of knowledge. I mean that quite sincerely. If we, who are well intentioned, are so ill informed, how much despair must people of color feel when trying to solve some of these problems that affect them and not us? I will send Betsy and Chris the information and addresses of CA authorities from Amnesty International when I receive it, but what else can we do? Frankly, it is hard to be as informed as one would like.

We must continue to forge links with like-minded people throughout all kinds of communities to become better informed. Larry, a lawyer from Albany, spoke of Leonard Peltier's case (I know you are familiar with it) and recommended a couple of books for me to send you. Have you read *Agents of Repression* (about the FBI and their involvement with the Black Panthers and AIM?) or *The Co-Intel Papers*? Let me know. I will be looking for them in the meantime.

Friday was really a very intense day for deep conversation. Betsy and another woman and I were the last ones left around the kitchen table late that night. It really was wonderful. I love to go to bed fired up like that: new connections with people who understand where you are coming from and with new ideas for making changes!

Saturday morning Marilyn and I struck the tent and trekked off the Shelburne Falls, MA, for a trip to the Bridge of Flowers (see enclosed brochure) and the Deerfield River glacial pot/swimming holes beneath it (see enclosed pictures). That's deep living! We spent several hours just letting little waterfalls run over our heads!!! It was great! I got home tired but energized from the Massachusetts Live Out. It was quite an adventure. Hope it happens again next year. And I plan to visit the folks at the Free School in Albany when I go to see my mom in Schenectady. It is nice that they are in an area where I may see them again.

Please give my regards to Tamu. I am waiting to hear from her about the bookstore orders. I have the publishers' catalogs piled up on my desk!

Till next time,
Andrée (aka Quig, etc.)

Ellen (Becker):

The Berkshire Live Out—what to say. Being a parent of alternative schoolers for twelve years, I find myself relearning and adding to what I know about alternative schooling.

Namely, that it is important. Mabel Dennison says something so simple, that it is profound—children need to do something that has meaning to them

Namely, it works. Jon Scott tells his amazing story of a childhood without traditional schooling (he was schooled in the Modern School tradition). He is a man who has not only survived but flourished.

Namely, it has broad applications. Elizabeth Quigley shares her heart with delinquent kids in Philadelphia. She tells them, 'You can make a difference. You can change your life.' She treats them like human beings. The result: eighty-five percent attendance with kids that are often truants and in big trouble.

Namely, it is fun. We spend hour after hour talking educational philosophy with Ron Miller and then spending the evening laughing ourselves silly at Monty Python skits.

As for the milieu, the kitchen is a hub. You can go there and get into a conversation at any time. Mutual interests spring up and flower. People come in and are welcomed into the whole with lightning speed.

The flow is magical. The adults spend day after day immersed in deep conversation in the big room. The life of the children flows all around. Each is in harmony with the other.

The talent show. What a trip. The kids put on an outrageous fashion show. My husband and I lead the assembled throng in a silly song which my kids sing for days after.

Good food, good company, good conversation. What more could you ask?

Frank (Houde):

Cape house.
Yankee spare, foursquare.
Yankee rich,
Full of people, full of love.

Sometimes scared there,
Sad or angry.
Always caring.
Glad of days there.

Yankee spare, Yankee rich.
Full of caring, truth and love.

Gloria Jean (Knorr Post):

I feel like a tree standing with branches reaching for

the
sun,
blown by the wind,
and nourished from the earth through roots.
I grow, flower, and fill with singing birds
in the forest at Journeys End.

Love,
Gloria

John (Gatto):

Dear Mary,

Your conference was rare and unusual; it should be the mode for all such because very congregational. Use anything here you like.

Dear Chris,

You are a good writer and a good closet poet too—why not more work in ΣΚΟΛΕ and elsewhere. Betsy, however, is prettier, sharp as a tack, and unflappable!

Love, John

Kate (Kerman):

[You will find Kate's offering starting on page 90 of this issue, since she sat down herself down at our Mac and wrote us a fine, reflective article, which I recommend for your serious consideration!]

Larry (Becker):

THE HALLS

The halls with floors waxed gleaming smooth
With many doors and many rooms
Where desks are fastened forming rows
Which fill with children's quickened looks.

I sat there once upon a time
Exchanging what I thought was mine
For that which others gave to me
To carry, perhaps, thoughtlessly.

I took the lessons pounded home
And watched the clock 'til three came 'round
Then walked with friends to corner store
For trading cards and ever more.

Now I see my son and daughters
Friends and others 'round in circles
Racing through their school like comets
Oft in orbits I can't follow.

Youth is not a place for storage
Here their hearts grow wide with purpose
Give them what they now can ask for
I stand and see them from afar.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Marilyn (Spitz):

(Farewell and Thank you!)

The *Woods* are *lovely, dark* and *deep*,
But I have promises to keep,
And *miles to go* before I sleep,

And miles to go before I sleep.

It's not often any more that one can enter a community of people and feel *so at ease and welcomed*. I'm impressed at the closeness of this group and how they are so intellectually stimulating to each other and to me. It is quite exciting to be around a community of people such as all of you are! Mary, you are a 'trip.' I hope I can be like you when I grow up!

I love how you all interact—with such honesty! The children are especially *wonderful*. I've learned a lot in two days. You have enriched my *Spirit*. You are very lucky to be in a family like this and I have felt privileged to have been a part of this place.

God Bless.

Maryellen Wells:

Dear Mary,

You asked me to relay my thoughts on the conference, and as I said on the phone, I feel unprepared to do so because I had not come to any conclusions in my brief time there. I apparently did not receive a handout that provided directions and additional guidelines which were not included on the yellow sheet I picked up at the kitchen counter. Without that information, I was assessing what I saw from the same viewpoint as I did the Conferences in Concord and at Fruitlands.

You probably noted that I am a friendly person and am willing and interested to hear the views of others, but I sensed a difference in the experience for your Free School people who were familiar with the facilities and each other as compared to the newcomers. I could see that Betsy, Kathy and others were 'put upon' in the area of food preparation—but some of us had invested in, and packed, supplies that we intended to eat from a cooler in the tenting area. Eating in the house with the group seemed to be the only social option for me a couple of times, but

I found it a hassle to plan how I could supply a meal or a portion of a meal for the whole group. I've lived alone for eight years, and am not handy at such things (From 1989 to 1992 I ate all my meals sitting on my bed because there was no room for a table, chairs or couch in my little apartment.). The point that applies to all of the newcomers is that it is hard to quickly throw a meal together in a strange kitchen and without a good grocery store nearby. And there was a chance that valuable presentation time would have been missed in meal preparation. The Free School people borrow each other's notes at a latter (sic) time, but I hadn't come up with a plan for this. This sounds awfully picky, but I don't think there is a simple way to equalize meal preparation duties.

I came in with the view of being a passive observer, and I wanted a passive role because I have a lot of stress in my job and personal life recently. When the incident over the computer occurred on Tuesday evening, I didn't realize that *all* were expected to attend the conflict resolution meeting. I had just begun an intense conversation with Coyote when everyone disappeared; and we were not present. I am cautious to make judgments when I cannot observe first hand, but I made two observations on Monday morning that might help me interpret the Tuesday night meeting.

One: When I arrived on Monday morning ... only a brief time when I heard you confront Jerry on his method of controlling Jennifer. I was naturally inclined to rally to your side in support of feminism, but I was also concerned that Jerry may not have taken your strong words constructively.

Two: I heard the word Gestalt later in the morning and suspected that this was the approach you were taking. If so, it is probably effective with Jerry because he knows you, has been nurtured by you and would not be surprised by your directness. If I understand it correctly, Gestalt is purposely confrontative, but should be practiced in a safe, neutral ground.. Although you created a terrific conference in an unusual and pleasant setting, those coming there for the first time will not have a sense of safety and neutrality equal to those who were attending from the community.

If I had been at that meeting, you may have been tempted to use a confrontational approach to draw me out. If you had, you may have opened up some wounds that could not be "stitched up" before I had to leave. To most people, I appear very happy and friendly—yet there are years of abuse in my history, and some tragedies that have left me very lonely. I am very perceptive of the pain of the abused. While at Vanderweyden Hall, I could watch conflict and interactions and be very accurate in my predictions of the outcome. My road to strength is to trust my perceptions and try to use them to some positive end. The concern I want to express here, is to remind you that newcomers cannot be on equal footing with the Community members, and being strangers with unknown emotional histories; they can represent 'kegs of dynamite' that could go off unpredictably in a confrontation.

Your conference filled my every hour with exposure to new ideas and to exciting people. It was excellent in that regard, but if I had been able to return, I may have come closer to finding my vision of where I may fit best in the education 'world'—which has limitless possibilities. Right now, however, I don't feel rushed, and there are reasons why it is best that I not be tempted into career commitments at this time. Enough rambling for now ...

Thank you and
Best Wishes to you and Bill.

Missy (Marceau):

My stay at the Berkshire Live-out was a vibrant and alive experience. Many thanks to you, Mary, for the birth of this babe, for your electric spirit and for the open welcome to your sweet Berkshire home.

The continuous flow of people coming and going never felt void of intimacy and real communication. I personally felt my sleepy nature enlivened with the excitement of learning. What John Gatto has is catchy. His enthusiasm and love of life and learning is simply honest, thought provoking and beautiful. Pat Farenga's words were inspiring. He honors the path of John Holt and has personally incorporated them in his life and work with respect for his own personal style and ways. Ron Miller, a deep thinking man whose attention has been for the total child is creating that wholeness for his family in community.

Many thanks to Jon Scott for sharing his life at the Modern School. Reading was his choice at nine, as being a professor at SUNY at Albany is his choice now. Mabel Dennison's sharing was valuable and honoring of free thinkers! Jerry Mintz encouraged reflection about a situation which arose with the kids, showed us tapes about other schools and played video magic and laughter games. AllPIE home schoolers Katharine and Seth, Free Schoolers, teachers, parents and many kids all made this a 'happening'.

Sleeping under the cloudy, star-laden skies was rejuvenating and peaceful. Eating and cooking communally was fun and deeply delicious. The personal interactions with all cemented my belief that sharing and listening with honesty and open-heartedness is *where it's at.* Thank you all.

Love, Missy

Nancy (Mittleman):

Dear Friends and Lovers,

It's called Journey's End, but actually it's more like Journey's Beginning. It's been a week of intense and beautiful sharing, a time of becoming a family sharing ideas, feelings, experiences, reflections, energy, and yes, FOOD, yum! There is nothing like living together. So much happens around the kitchen table. The facades gradually fall away, we become more and more real with each other. We see and respect each other as being in this together, in a world that challenges us every step of the way to be aware, to be open, to have courage, and to love.

Thanks to you, Mary, for bringing us all together and giving me this opportunity to stretch my thinking and my world. The talk has been a unique mixture of male and female thinking, from large theorizing about education and society down to sharing experiences of one-on-one interactions that have made a profound difference on someone's life, one life that will act in a ripple-effect to change the world. It's been a gathering of great minds and even bigger hearts! The caring that has been expressed this week by everyone has been of itself wonderfully nurturing. I thank all of you for your special gifts that have been present with you here. I could name each one of you, from the youngest to the oldest, and say that you genuinely touched me with your presence this week. I see this gathering as a christening of this special place called Journey's End and that many more nurturing times will be a blessing to all of us here.

Pat (Farenga):

Impressions of the Live-out

The location, Mary's home in the country, a lived-in place with children running in and out of it, immediately put me at ease. I felt like I was speaking with a group of friends, not conference attendees. I arrived with just a few ideas of what I'd like to examine with such a group of people, but decided to let the group move of its own volition into whatever areas it wished to cover with me. As a result, particularly once Jerry Mintz got into the act, and then later John Gatto, I found myself listening more than talking, and the discussion veered into a million different avenues. I still can't sum up what we talked about, and probably never will be able to, since we covered personal problems with schooling, computers, history and more.

However, I want to emphasize an issue I tried to put out: how can we create a learning society? It is society, not schools, that provide the most profound learning experiences. Indeed, it is often said that schools are but microcosms of society, and if that is so, wouldn't our time and money be equally well spent by making society better for children and adults than just schools? Can schools do with less and free that money and talent up for non-school purposes which are nonetheless eminently 'educational:' improved library services; apprenticeships and internships; better access to museums, parks, playgrounds; more access to work places where kids can see what work adults do and thereby gain an idea as to what and why they might want to learn certain skills and concepts; improved local medical care (especially access to low-cost alternative nutritional, birthing and health maintenance sources); local self-sufficiency (letting kids work alongside adults in gardens, buildings, day-care, to name some, *instead* of going to school during 9-3, M-F); etc. Can teachers find venues other than school for teaching? Ways and strategies to do this interest me a great deal, and I have my own thoughts on this (naturally!), but to hear what alternative teachers in the field have to add to this would have been extremely valuable. I read and hear a lot of the usual bromides from traditional educators on this issue: longer school year, more rigorous curricula, clearly defined standards, etc. I think this group would have forged some new ground on this issue, but we were destined to move in another direction. Perhaps at the next Live-out...

Seeing old friends and making new friends was an extra bonus for me!

Ron (Miller):

Hello Mary and friends! It is wonderful to be here to share this 'live-out' with you all. You are all such a warm, welcoming group that I felt at home immediately. I hope our emerging community in Vermont will have this kind of atmosphere; I know it's something we have to work for. Maybe I'll have you come up sometime to lead a workshop on community building. Hey—that's a great idea—and if we decide to start some kind of school as well, you would be a valuable resource in that aspect too.

We have, in fact, talked about having interesting visitors come to the community to lead work-shops and give presentations on all kinds of subjects. I'll make sure that you're on our list.

Meanwhile, I'm just glad to be here today. It is both restful and stimulating for me. There aren't too many groups of people who would enjoy spending an ENTIRE afternoon in a fairly stuffy room on a beautiful summer day, discussing the fine points of educational philosophy. I thrive on that, which is my own personal weirdness, but I get very few opportunities to do it, which has made me increasingly cranky the past couple of years. It was very energizing to have a chance to take part in this conversation with you. On top of that, the Monty Python video was perfect—I haven't laughed so hard in years.

Next time, I'd love to have a day with Gatto; we'd have a great verbal battle that I'm sure would be very entertaining. No, actually we probably agree on far more things than we disagree.

Anyway, I think that's all I'll write. This is what I do for a living, and now I'm on vacation! My best wishes to you all.

Ruth (Madeira):

Dear everybody,

I wanted most of all to tell you how broadening the last few days have been for me. I really felt welcomed into your lives and community. It was fascinating to see all of you working as a group to apply ideas and philosophies to your daily lives. I have frequently felt very isolated when struggling to do this either alone or as a member of a large but nuclear family, where my husband and I must serve as each others major support system. I am going home with much optimism and some new ideas too. It was also loads of fun most of the time! Incidentally, I really appreciate the welcome extended to my daughter and I feel she has made contacts during the week that she will value and carry away with her. It is easy for me to trick myself into thinking that I have failed to express my own very eclectic philosophy to this most beloved child, and look only at those things about her that make me anxious on her behalf. Watching her joyously leap into this radically different experience has cleared my mind of a lot of that garbage. I thank all of you from the bottom of my heart for this new view of her and myself.

I also wanted to describe to you all a small bit of personal growth that took place this morning while I was reading Herndon in the tent this morning right after the sun came up. (something I would never have been doing had I not come here!) While reading about kids struggling with the school system I suddenly saw that what I have often casually called 'my case of writers block', which amounts to a crippling inability to write anything that I am 'supposed' to write, for whatever reason, is probably strongly related to adolescent frustration at several teachers who told my parents they thought I was a potential writer of great promise and yet continued to damage me in the way that teachers often do in the public schools. I was rather sophisticated as a teenager, but nowhere near enough to see these contradictions as human efforts to do ones best, and could only respond with blind rebellion, which carried through into most inappropriate places in my adult life. Since I have already to some degree begun to overcome this block, I trust this further insight will allow me to continue to clear my life of these truly unnecessary limitations that I now inflict upon myself, in the absence of anyone else to inflict them on me.

Looking back over this letter, I think it stilted and awkward in places, but it accurately reflects some of my thoughts and feelings at this time, so I will leave it as it stands and just say thanks for the opportunity to participate in the Live-In and that I hope not to lose touch with you.

Ted (Becker):

FIRE, WATER, AIR, EARTH

Fire, water, air,
    plants and trees
Create one earth
If they zoom all together,
Circle up to the sky
    and come back down
Into a ball.

Ted is eight years old.

Mary:

Well, I promised to try to summarize what we got during that amazing week! It has been so rich and varied, and life in the community ever since has been so end-of-season rushed that the summation has been delayed until now—also, Chris and I went down to an AllPIE conference in Poughkeepsie which was extremely valuable in lots of ways, and I wanted to get Katharine's and Seth's responses to the Live-out—but they're doing all they can in their own sphere, so that was too much to hope for, at least, for now! In time, all will get done! I am planning to send out this mailing to anyone who either signed up and came or signed up and didn't make it so you'll know how welcome you will be at the next one, which is likely to be next winter school break, around February or so. We'll let you know.

We've been so energized and expanded in our thinking and feeling, our planning and envisioning, it's impossible to sum up anything adequately. All I can say now is that it feels like a new opening into hope, as Elizabeth Quigley (alias Quig, alias Andrée, God bless her street-wise, rock solid, utterly indomitable, rainbow-colored spirit!) says in her open letter to Sanyika. She sees the wonder of finding new sisters and brothers. Hey, that cuts two ways, Andrée! We all plan to stay here till we outnumber 'em, like the two rabbits hiding in the hollow log while the dogs and hunters raise a racket all around them. It's been our plan since Square One. And Sanyika, baby, your ass is grass, if you think you can avoid us from now on, OK? I intend to make that stick when you get out, if I'm still on the planet (I'm nearly 73). In the meanwhile, sock it to us if you can. Ha.

Now what? Well, Scott Peck says, you gotta learn to switch from content to process and back again, which is hard for folks brought up in our adorable schools, so-called. So that's the drill for now, if you have the stomach for it. Challenge each other if you don't like what anyone wrote. Send back David Madeira's pillow. Keep the energy going. And tell me pronto (as Pat Farenga did) if you don't want your words to appear in the winter issue of ΣΚΟΛΕ—but doggone it, try not to get too temperamental, OK? This stuff is one of the missing ingredients in school reform no one ever mentions—the personal, the relational. I'll be hammering away at that gap in ΣΚΟΛΕ from now on—among other things, natch.

So write if you find work—
...and love, of course,
Mary

P.S. I'm realizing I need to add in Chris' letter to Sanyika. It's long overdue, this re-balancing of our perspective. Like AIDS, the imprisoning of black men, the jailing of black young men, the ignoring of the brutality and irrelevance of schooling on black kids—especially black boys—is truly nothing short of genocide! And all the young black women who lift their skirts for the cops so they can go on stealing to get drug money, prostituting, having addicted black babies who will grow up to get shot by the time they're eleven! Or put in prison for years or even life!

I keep remembering the statement about Nazism someone made: they came for the Communists, but I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the gypsies, but I wasn't a gypsy. Then they came for the political radicals, but I wasn't a political radical. Then they came for the Jews, but I wasn't a Jew. And then they came for me.

7/31/93

Dear Sanyika,

I've just been getting to know Elizabeth Quigley from Pennsylvania at a week-long education conference that my school is holding in western Massachusetts. Our school, the Free School, is actually located in inner-city Albany, New York, about seventy miles away; but we are blessed to be here on this farm in the Berkshire Mountains which belongs to our 73 year old founder, Mary Leue. Last night, Elizabeth, (an extraordinary woman, isn't she?), loaned me her copy of your book, and I stayed up half the night finishing it so that I could return it to her before she left today. What an absolutely excellent piece of work, and thank you for writing it. My faith in some sort of a knowing divine presence needs reinforcing many times daily to keep my cynicism and sense of inner helplessness in check, and knowing that you were somehow able to get your story out is what I'm talking about. And I don't mean to not honor the courage and perseverance you channeled into doing it. I've begun doing some serious writing over the past year or two, and the task of articulating MY OWN meaning has not come easily to me. Your book moved me in profound ways, and I'm not sure I'm ready to write about that yet. I did, though, want to take advantage of this quiet time now (my wife and daughters have gone off somewhere for the afternoon along with most everyone else), and write to you while the urge was still fresh.

My own profound belief is that all participants—and it doesn't much matter whether you 'participate' willingly or unwillingly, consciously or unconsciously—of the mass culture that currently predominates in the United States have been 'soulpoisoned' (and I don't mean that in a Roman Catholic way, though I sometimes refer to myself as a 'recovering' Catholic). One of the most effective antidotes that I know of is for each of us, in whatever way imaginable that works for us, to just tell our own stories, and then stand with ourselves—and then each other—with as much compassion as our hearts can bear. One of the most moving experiences of my life occurred a couple of years ago when a friend of mine, Ed Tick, a very unconventional psychotherapist who has spent his entire career helping badly damaged Viet Nam vets to recover themselves, got a dozen or so men together to explore how the war had affected our lives and divided our generation. Our ages tended to range from late thirties to late forties and half of us were vets and half of us were draft resisters or evaders. As far as any of us knew, this was the first time anything like this had been attempted. It was definitely the first time any of the vets had spoken out with non-vets, and it was my first personal encounter with combat veterans. I guess we all came a bit reluctantly, and while we were sitting around nervously getting to know each other and kicking around what in the hell we were going to do now that we were together for an entire weekend, one of the vets—this hyper Italian named Pat—exploded with, 'Jesus fucking Christ, Ed! I can't stand this any more. Unless I get a chance to tell my story— NOW—then I'm fuckin outta here.'

So, in no time, a 'truth stick' was fashioned, and the rules were real simple: You spoke as long as you held the stick and as long as you needed to, and to the best of your ability you only spoke your own truth. Needless to say, Pat started us off (it was about 11 a.m.), and when the last man was done, someone checked their watch and found that it was after 2 a.m. the next morning. The process was so compelling that it hadn't even occurred to us to stop to eat! This is a very long story, and I'm trying to tell you just enough to make one, maybe two points. First, again, was the healing power—for every one of us there—in just speaking out our own stories. The momentum we created together was tremendous, and every one of us found ourselves uncovering material and making inner connections that we hadn't dreamed of. Tears flowed like summer rain. Deep anguish, rage, betrayal, guilt, and abandonment were repeating themes.

The other thing I want to share with you about this is the power of this experience for me in having done this with a group of men, many of whom were coming from a very different place than me. (I had been a conscientious objector.) I know there is a lot about the current white middle class 'men's movement' that is a crock of shit, but this was for real. Looking back, I do regret that the group was not more racially diverse (one man was hispanic; the rest were working or middle class whites, some from strong ethnic backrounds, some not.) Still, we were a group that began with an enormous gulf between us due to our divergent responses to the war and due to the incredible psychic impact of the war on my immediate generation. The public telling of our stories began a process which by Sunday night had made us one group united in our new-found compassion for ourselves and for each other. Ed Tick is a nationally recognized expert on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and one of the chapters in his forthcoming book about his work with vets tells the whole story of our weekend together. If you'd like, I'll send you a copy when it's released. In the book, Ed goes into great detail exposing, in particular, the role the Veterans Administration has played in keeping vets down and divided amongst themselves. Did you know that more Viet Nam vets have now killed themselves back 'home' since the war ended than were killed in combat? I didn't know that chilling fact until I met Ed.

I guess this also leads to me telling you that my heart, which by this point you had in the palm of your hand, absolutely sank when I read your conclusion at the end of your book that you saw separation as the only way for African-Americans to recover themselves as a people. Which isn't to say you aren't right; you may well be. Even if you're 'wrong,' I certainly hear where you're coming from. Still my hearts sinks at such a prospect. I have lived in the inner-city for over twenty years, and have been to many African-American funerals and weddings as well. I was once the best man at a black friend's wedding. My brother-in-law is a black Marine colonel, though he comes from far more privileged roots than my friends and neighbors in Albany. Can you hear what I'm saying? I don't want to explain my sentiment away, and I certainly don't want to initiate a theoretical debate now. Your book rightly stands on its own terms. You have to realize that I've spent my adult life working with young children, of roughly equal numbers of diverse races and social classes. We are truly an integrated school; in fact we put the onus on the middle class parents of all races, to get their kids to us. It's a beautiful thing to watch the prejudice, which tends to flow pretty evenly in all directions, melt away as the kids find themselves thrown together in a truly common enterprise, with no one's cultural integrity sacrificed in the process. Some day I'll tell you more about my school if you want. Suffice it to say that it's far more an 'enterprise' than anything else. I can say with confidence that no kid, no matter how hard-boiled (and like Elizabeth, we get a lot of those, only usually a little younger) spends at least six months with us and then leaves with anything more than traces of racial prejudice. I realize the problem of institutionalized racism is much, much more complex, but alas, teaching children is essentially based on hope, and lots of it. So, I will continue to hope, and to pray that we can work towards real solutions together and as Dr. King preached, reach that day when all God's children...

Well, I set out this afternoon just to tell you how much I appreciated your book and to introduce myself to you. I've gone a bit farther than that. Let me know if you'd like to correspond some more, and I'd love to write again. Elizabeth told me a little about the enterprise your wife is starting. Over the years, our school has started any number of small, community-based institutions, including a bookstore, so let me know if you think there's any way we can support you all.

In support,
Chris

ESSENTIAL PEACEMAKING

Bringing together the oldest adversaries: women and men

an interview with Danaan Parry and Jerilyn Brusseau,

by Robert Gilman

Nowhere do the deep uncertainties over the right balance of interconnection and separation affect us more personally than in the area of gender relations. If we can't make peace there, we are unlikely to be able to have peace on a societal or international level.

That's certainly the conclusion to which Danaan Parry and Jerilyn Brusseau have come. They have each spent much of their lives as peace makers, Danaan as co-founder of the Earthstewards Network, and Jerilyn as founder of Peace Table. Both were extensively involved with citizen diplomacy in the former USSR, with peace work in the Middle East, and with the Peace Trees program.

Now they've combined forces in a new program called Essential Peace-making/Women and Men. Their intention with this program is to help bring into being a broad-based—indeed, world-wide—grassroots process in which women and men can have a healing dialogue within a safe environment, overcome miscommunications, and grow a deeper trust and synergy both within and between the sexes.

To help get this process rolling, they've developed a format for a one-day Essential Peacemaking gathering that is to be widely replicated. In addition, they've developed a series of two workshops to train facilitators for these one-day gatherings.

In early October 1992, four of us from Context Institute (Carla Cole, Duane Piekelsen, Diane Gilman and I) took part in the first (two day) workshop, and at the end of that month, Diane and I took the second (three-day) workshop for facilitators. The short report is: it works.

Three aspects of the Essential Peacemaking process seem to me to make it particularly effective and replicable:

- The process is simple in a sophisticated way, involving a half-dozen specific activities for the one-day gathering. Drawing on their experience working with groups and with gender, Danaan and Jerilyn have honed the process to just what is essential—and that makes it possible to do a credible job of preparing facilitators through the five-day training process.

- The process provides a framework, but the content comes from the participants themselves, from their own experiences. This is not a place to learn what some workshop leader thinks is the politically correct way to deal with gender issues; rather it is a place to explore the complexity of these issues as they exist in the lives of real people, and then grow beyond what is to what can be.

- The steps in the process alternate between single-gender activities (men sharing with men, women sharing with women) and mixed gender activities (where women and men are together). This allows a level of discovery and growth that is essentially impossible in only one of those formats.

To me, Essential Peacemaking represents a much needed next step in the women's and men's movements. I hope it is an early sign of a much broader trend.

A few days after we had finished the second workshop, I had a chance to talk with Jerilyn and Danaan about Essential Peacemaking:

Robert: *You have been involved with all kinds of conflict resolution projects in the past. Why are you now focusing on gender issues?*

Jerilyn: For the past several years my work has been bringing people together to share the culinary and agricultural traditions unique to their own cultures: Arab cultures, Latin cultures, Western European, all over the old Soviet Union, North American, Hispanic cultures in North America, and the cultures of people of color in this country. Through exploring these traditions, quite accidentally I discovered a connection to the other women involved that I didn't necessarily feel elsewhere, and doors opened to their sharing what was really deep, meaningful, and very close to their hearts.

That sharing has led to the work of Essential Peacemaking, which I see as a process for exploring the issues that have kept our genders apart and that could bring our genders more closely together in dynamic and powerful ways.

Danaan: I came to the importance of working with gender issues from a frustrating search for what works for effective conflict resolution. My particular interest is in helping people work with their conflicts to find common ground and to look into the deeper conflicts that we usually ignore because we focus instead on the resolution of surface conflicts.

The truth is, it's a frustrating business because most people don't want to look there. They'd rather kill each other, or they want to get fixed up just enough to cope.

Robert: *What sorts of conflicts are you thinking of ?*

Danaan: Arabs and Israelis arguing about whether the Koran or the Torah is right. Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland fighting over issues which they have fought over for hundreds of years. They will continue to fight over these unless they are willing to look deeper—at their real fears. In my experience, these fears don't lie with religion or with land or territorial imperatives; they lie deeper than that.

So what is an avenue that one can invite people to walk along that will lead to a place that is dark and deep enough where the real answers lie?

The only consistent answer to that question that I have found is gender issues. I'm excited about gender issues as gender issues, but I'm more excited about gender issues being a crack in the door into a very deep, and usually dark and scary, but incredibly productive and alive place, where, when we are willing to go there, we really do resolve our conflicts. It's an invitation to intimacy, and almost all conflict is a cry for intimacy.

Perhaps because it's a subject everybody relates to, 'women and men' is mysterious and fascinating enough to draw people into amazingly deep explorations. And most times, there is a doorway that leads to the resolution of different conflicts as well.

I can get Catholic men and Protestant men in Northern Ireland talking in the same room about what it's like to be a man, but I can never get them to start talking in the same room about what it's like to be an Irish Catholic and an Irish Protestant. Yet once I've got them in the same room talking about as deep an issue as gender, there is a possibility of my bridging from that to other issues that impact their lives, but not the other way around.

Robert: *What are you discovering about women and men through this?*

Jerilyn: A lot of commonality across cultures. The issues women voice and the values we express seem like a shared deep taproot into something that is woman. I see the same kind of thing in the men as well.

Danaan: I agree. When you get down to the stuff men deal with, as men, there is such a congruence of issues that it is scary, amazing, and wonderful all at the same time.

It probably won't come as any surprise to you that self-esteem is a fundamental issue. One of the things that we hear a lot in the trainings—I'm going to generalize but it's a pretty good one and definitely cross-cultural—is that most women have something inside of them that is ashamed to be a woman and most men have something inside of them that is ashamed to be a man. There is some element in the answer to the question of, 'What is it like to be a man?' that is 'I'm not proud of it.'

Jerilyn: Likewise what I hear and see and feel from thousands of women in every culture I've visited is this generalized feeling that we're the lesser breed. That's quite a legacy to live out!

Danaan: Isn't that interesting that men are saying it about men and women are saying it about women? We're not saying it across the sexes as much as we're saying it about ourselves.

Jerilyn: Yet here we are in 1992, a time of women rediscovering and reaffirming our tremendous value and strength. Many women have, through the centuries, held on to that strength and many, many women haven't. There is a lot of wounding, on all sides, that needs to be healed.

We need to sit down with each other and allow the differences to be, and rather approach with awe that two beings can hold such differences as male and female. Then we can begin taking the wires off of the bomb.

We also need to learn to stand on the esteem, honor, and dignity of our own gender, and to speak from that place. It's like a well. When I can begin to live out of that well of the deep strength and dignity of woman, then I can begin to learn of the depth of the well that men live in.

Danaan: Just as Jerilyn and other women seem to have been taught that they were second-class citizens, you can ask, 'Well, what were men taught?' Were we taught that we're first class citizens? It would have been interesting to have gotten that message, but I didn't get that. What I got was that I was responsible for the mess. That may translate into being the first-class citizen but it's a pretty lousy transfer. The message I got was that, 'You men are responsible, you have all the wars, you kill all the people, you rape all the women, you molest all the babies. It's you, you, you, you, you!' At some level, almost at a cellular level, most men that I work with have that somewhere inside of them.

This collective guilt is like an iron blanket that keeps a lot of men from ever changing. It's a 'Catch 22': the guilt is so heavy that you can never get beyond the guilt to change the system, which then propagates the old system, including more guilt.

For us to be able to heal, or for us even to listen to one another, it has to come from a basis of respect. And the first step in that respect is for us to respect ourselves. When I feel good about being a man then I can use that male energy for something I'll be proud of.

The good news is that regular folks have the skills, caring, and creativity to do this. In my experience, men sharing with men about being men is a very exciting, cutting edge process. We get into it and we love it. A level of trust builds amazingly quickly where we can begin to respect one another, and we can start to bring up otherwise unspeakable questions.

When that happens, we can come back to our sisters and begin to communicate as whole human beings. They notice the difference. They feel it. And especially when the women have done their work and come back as whole human beings, all of a sudden we're talking about stuff that really counts, and being human goes to another level.

Robert: *What do you hope Essential Peacemaking will accomplish?*

Danaan: I want to underline that part of the design of the Essential Peacemaking process is a body of well-trained facilitators who reach out around the planet—not just to the folks in Seattle or San Francisco, but to those in Billings, Montana, or Cedar Falls, Iowa, or India, or Russia as well. They are just as much a part of the positive change that needs to happen as anyone else. We plan to really push to make that happen. The whole design of this system is for enough people to do this work and take it out into the world so that the facilitators of the Essential Peacemaking gatherings are actually the field workers for a global community of men and women who are healing the man/woman wound, building the trust and the respect that we talked about.

Jerilyn: In a practical way, these facilitators are a microcosm of what can be. That is, when a woman and a man work together to facilitate a gathering, they are going to deal with much that comes up around women and men working together in partnership. They're bringing other men and women together too, but the simple fact that they're willing to go through it is a really important model.

Hopefully this will be part of a trickle-up process. The more there are these grass-roots gatherings co-led by women and men who can relate to each other, the more it will be commonplace for women and men to be co-leading in the world. Just imagine the leaders of the countries being co-leaders, a male and female at the helm.

I have this dream of a balanced world where manipulation and abuse, betrayal and reprisal, will have fallen into the past. And so we will, in an evolutionary way, move past our need to destroy ourselves and each other.

*For more information about **Essential Peacemaking**, contact the Earthstewards Network, PO Box 10697, **Bainbridge Island**, WA 98220, 206/842-7986.*

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REVIEW-CUM-DIATRIBE:
***School Dropouts: The Tragedy of America's Under-educated Youth*, by Carlos Bonilla PhD. & Jana L. Brazda.**
ICA Publishing Inc., 1020 N. Commerce, Stockton, CA 95202. pb $29.95.

ROBOTS BUILDING ROBOTS, PART TWO:
Heartlessness in America
by Mary M. Leue

In the first issue of ΣΚΟΛΕ, in the autumn of 1985, I wrote an essay which I called 'Robots Building Robots.' This image was based on a *New Yorker* cartoon depicting two men standing in conversation near the door of a fctory room filled with assembly lines at which robots are busy building other robots. One says to the other, 'One wonders where it all might end!' My essay came out of the deep concern I had begun to feel over the creeping depersonalization of American society. It was becoming clear to me that this depersonalization, this anomie, was at the core of all of our 'American problems,' underlying all the other issues we face, like crime, violence, addiction, co-dependency, homelessness, divorce, illiteracy, promiscuity, prejudice, child abuse, unemployment, narcissism and general shallowness of feeling. And my target for the creation of this depersonalization was—and still is—school. This is where children learn to depersonalize their experience of life by being consistently trained to ignore their own needs, wishes and impulses and instead, follow what the teacher tells them to do!

As I compared the feeling tone of the public school classrooms attended by my own children between the years 1949 and 1972 (I had five!) with those of the children who were coming to us as refugees from the public schools in 1985, what I saw was an increasing degree of heartlessness toward children. It is my profound belief now that this heartlessness has grown exponentially in the years since 1985—let alone since my children's childhood—and staggeringly so since my own!

I began kindergarten in 1924, at the age of four-and-a-half—and loved it! I graduated from high school in 1936, having loved every year of school except eighth grade, which I had entered when we moved away from a small New England town to a large industrial city. The feeling I had of being an anonymous face in the crowd, by contrast with having felt like 'somebody,' in the small town school, was appalling to me! When I got home from that first day, my mother asked me how it had gone—and I burst into tears! Until that moment, I had not even realized how oppressed I had felt! I had simply been coping. My outburst of feeling was as surprising to me as it was to my mother!

Come to think of it, ninth grade was hardly better, although I had learned how to cope without falling apart. But it was only when I became a tenth grader, and a member of an élite 'track'—the college preparatory students—that I was really able to invest myself in real learning again. The eighth- and ninth-grade years had been spent simply doing what was expected of me—keeping my nose clean, like a nice middle-class girl.

At least part—perhaps even most—of the heartlessness I felt in 8th and 9th grades, came from the mere size of the new school! John Potter's speech to the Small Schools Association which I reprinted in the summer, 1986 issue of ΣΚΟΛΗ, makes this point very tellingly. Being put on the college-bound track, along with only thirty-some kids, in effect created a small school inside the big one, and helped me regain some sense of my own personhood. I was one of the 'smart' ones, not like those stupid kids in the 'commercial' track—or, God forbid, not like those total losers in the 'home economics (girls)' or the 'manual training (boys)' tracks. Looking back, the whole experience strikes me as having the quality of a cartoon image, in the crudity of its classification of school kids!

Carlos Bonilla, along with Jana L. Brazda, has just published a new book called *School Dropouts: The Tragedy of America's Undereducated Youth*, which I would urge you to buy and read. Carlos, that extraordinary humanist and cat-and-people-lover from Stockton, California whom I am honored to call my pen pal, has a totally clear view of the problem that exists in the public schools—in all its dimensions—which has created this massive dropout rate, and the price paid by the kids themselves—and the rest of us—resulting from this pattern. Here are a few Bonilla-flavored nuggets of wisdom. Read 'em and weep!:

Carlo-quotes:

DID YOU KNOW THAT:

Charles Deany, 59, Superintendent of the Harrison Elementary School District in Wonderlake, Illinois, was arrested May 5, 1993 by an undercover policewoman?

The Offense: Offered $25 to have sex with a 10-year-old girl!

Source: *Stockton Record*, May 8, 1993 and many other newspapers throughout the nation.

Well, guess what! It's worse now, not better! What has mainly changed, I believe, is the size of the problem. Our world's population has grown a lot; black families have fled en masse from the dead-end poverty of the post-slavery rural south to a hope for betterment in the big cities of the north; immigrant families have fled from the hopelessness of their own countries to those same American cities for similar reasons.

Carlo-quotes:

"The teacher, she screamed at me and called me stupid."

Luis, an immigrant student from Guatemala, dropped out at age 11 while in grammar school. Committed suicide less than a year later!

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The pressure on city school systems like Los Angeles, Chicago and New York to serve the needs of these children has made them hells on earth for everyone concerned, because of the impossibility of the job of educating these kids—at least, as defined by our educational theorists and bureaucrats. The kids' own response has been to quit! It's a totally understandable solution to an impossible situation—but the price is huge! Not just for them, but for us all!

The easy way out of dealing with this problem is to blame the victim—in this case, the dropout—or to isolate it if you don't happen to live in a city or to feel that your own kids are suffering. That's what the 'good Germans' did when Hitler came to power. They either blamed the Jews for their plight as a people or else told themselves that what the government was doing to any 'designated undesirable' wasn't relevant to themselves, not being Jewish, Communist, gypsy, radical priest or minister, outspoken university professor; you name it—in other words, not a member of one of the minorities being singled out by the Nazis. 'We're the good guys,' they thought. 'If the government says these are bad people, there must be some truth there. We just don't know enough to judge, so we'd better stay out of it.'

Carlo-quotes:

GLOSSARY

Educrat: A member of the highly-paid public (K-12) education bureaucracy or—better said—of the public school aristocracy.

?

Yes—we Americans can do that! Especially people under the age of fifty seem to find this response quite acceptable. This is the point Jonathan Kozol keeps making in his books—has been making since the sixties! Well, I call that 'Bluejeans fascism!' And I blame the public schools for its current prevalence! When you put children through a thirteen-year system based on cold-hearted, depersonalized conformity, regardless of how successful they may be by the time they emerge at the other end, one thing they will *not* be capable of doing is functioning democratically—particularly when the issue or the group or individual involved is in some way, culturally, racially, socio-economically, stylistically, ideologically—whatever—different from themselves!

We point to America's much-vaunted open-heartedness: toward starving children in Africa—toward hurricane victims in Miami—toward hungry cats or dogs—all perfectly real! We use these events as evidence that we are not in fact heartless! Well—sure. When our sympathies are aroused, we are among the world's most open-hearted people. AND SO WERE THE GERMAN PEOPLE—when their sympathies were aroused! It's a universal human characteristic to have both capacities in equal shares!—for compassion, for hate—depending on what feelings become aroused by our beliefs.

We are *all* capable of the extremes of both callousness *and* compassionate tender-heartedness! It just depends on what issue or event 'gets through' our tough outer skin and melts its way into our warm heart space! Or gets bounced off that tough hide by the belief that this person or event isn't deserving of our sympathies—or may even deserve being anathematized! Jim Jones and David Koresh both understood very well how this process affects human beings.

We Americans have become a nation exploding with opinionated passions—or passionate opinions! The talk shows on TV—like Jeraldo, Oprah, Monty Williams, Donahue—are popular precisely *because* everyone is so eager to express some passionately-held opinion on any and every subject, whether or not they know much about it. Radio call-in shows are always immensely popular. If we can't get to our legislators to influence their vote as individuals, we form pressure groups to lobby for us! The Congress is so beset by these highly-paid lobbyists—like the NRA or the farmers' organizations or the AARP or the tobacco industry's spokesmen—that many problems crying for solutions simply cannot be passed by a majority of the Congress! State legislatures fare even worse in some ways!

Well, I do know these issues won't be resolved by my ranting on about them—so I'll quit for now! But do get Carlos' splendid new book, which is loaded with helpful data of all sorts that can be used as fuel for lighting the fires of your passion for acting to help make changes in our heartless school system!

Here are a few samples:

Chapter 11
WHY DO STUDENTS DROP OUT?

" The teacher, she screamed at me and called me stupid ". —Luis, an immigrant student from Guatemala, dropped out at age 11 while in grammar school. Committed suicide less than a year later!

This, of course, is the crucial question to be asked and the one to which effective answers must be found.

The 'Experts', and this includes psychiatrists, psychologists and school counselors, have over the years advanced a myriad reasons for the school dropout problem. Since, we ourselves, do not qua,ify as any of these it behooves us to let those whom we consider **THE REAL EXPERTS:** that is, the students themselves tell us why it is that they drop out.

Based on their reasons and comments each one of us can then surmise what the problems are and propose potential solutions to curtail this tragedy:

- *'To prevent dropouts, I feel the parents should be educated on how to give support to their children ';* F.L., 18, Senior At Valley High School, Sacramento, California.

- *'My friend dropped out when she started high school. She was pregnant. She lived behind Raley's (Grocery Store) in a dumpster for a while. I don't know where she is now';* B.D., 15, Bella High School, Sacramento, California.

- *'If I had finished school, I know I'd have a better job. I'd feel better about myself';* T.C. 23, Dropped out of Pioneer High School (San Jose, California) at 16.

- *'Basically, school got real boring for me; They don't have classes that let you breathe, let you do something different';* W.D. A gifted student who dropped during his junior year, now a successful entrepreneur; (San Francisco, California)

- *'I always wanted to graduate; I wanted to go through the ceremony. that was my regret—that I didn't graduate, that I blew it';* S.R., speaking from a cell at San Quentin Prison, California.

- *'Not being able to read—it's embarrassing; I went through a lot of that. I never flunked a grade, but I never had any passing scores. I remember getting F's most of the time. I figured if they don't care, why should I? '* J.V.D., 23, dropped out at 16 when a sophomore.

- *'I was too smart for school; I don't think I made one clear decision during the time I was a student';* S.J., 23, dropped out at 17, now a successful businessman in California.

- *'I don't want my daughter to end up like me. I want her to go to school and like school and get a good education'; K.S.,* 23, dropped out as a junior.

- *'It is too easy to quit';* S.R.R., 24, dropped out during the senior year.

- *'I've found it so often: If you say dropout, automatically people don't want to talk to you';* D.Q., 22, left as a junior, now a successful businessman, San Jose, California.

- *'It seemed like they (the teachers) didn't really care. Everything was on my own. I didn't have nobody to look up to'; H.S., 23,* quit as a sophomore; now a construction worker.

- *'My life is like a paradox. I dropped out of school because I had to get a job. Now I can't get one because I dropped out of school';J.L.G., 18,* dropped out as a junior.

- *'While I was in school, I was encouraged to have goals like going to college; but when you're out on your own, the people who were giving those goals aren't there anymore. That's when you have to face reality'; L.G.,* 18, dropped out at 17; unemployed, Fresno, California.

- *'School just wasn't interesting. They didn't make me want to stay there. If was there, I didn't do anything just kick back and talk';* B.C., 19; dropped out as a junior, at 17.

- *'Teachers weren't willing to teach; they wouldn't pay any attention to you. Just give you assignments and not offer much help. I needed more attention and more enthusiasm from the teachers. If they had made learning fun, maybe I would have stayed';* Lisa, 17, dropped out as a sophomore. Now an unemployed welfare mother.

• *'The teacher, she screamed at me and called me stupid ';* Luis, dropped out at 11 while in grammar school. (committed suicide less than a year later).

• *'School is boring; They teach you about the past. Nobody wants to hear that. You want to hear about the present';* C.P., 18, dropped out as a junior; New York City.

• *'They get less understanding from the school system because they don't speak English well';* H.C., 15, a black student at manhattan's M.L. King, Jr. High School, describing the problems Latino students encounter in New York's schools.

Well, there we have it friends, the real experts have spoken and now you be the judges; what are some possible solutions to the problems students have with:

Uncaring, insensitive teachers
Teen pregnancy
Boring curricula
Large, impersonal classrooms and schools
Inattentive school systems

Furthermore, how should we better reward those teachers who do care, are sensitive to students' needs and generally do a fine job under trying circumstances—day in and day out?

Carlo-quote:
DID YOU KNOW THAT:

IN CHICAGO, OVER 46% OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS SEND THEIR OWN CHILDREN TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS?

GLOSSARY

Educrat: A member of the highly paid public (K-12) education bureaucracy or—better said—of the public school aristocracy.

NOW, LISTEN CAREFULLY, EDUCRATS:

Here is your lesson for TODAY:

1. Remove This Obfuscating Terminology From Your Vocabulary:

- Site-Based Decision Making
- On Site-Based Management
- Measurement-Driven Instruction
- Child-Centered Education
- Shared Decision Making

2. Then, Memorize and Use These Terms Instead:

- Common Sense-Based Education
- Ethics-Based Administration
- Student-Oriented Curriculum
- Caring, Nurturing-Based Environment
- Interesting/Thought Provoking-Based Teaching
- Skills-Based Training

3. Finally, Learn This One Till You Can Recite It By Heart:

- Administrator-Based Fiscally Responsible Management

OK. NOW, CAN YOU DO IT???

The very high incidence of school dropouts, throughout the nation, is viewed as one of the major factors contributing to the failure of the American educational system; the dropout problem affects not only the schools but our society as a whole.

Consider:

- dropouts lack the skills necessary to attain gainful employment, thus, they are more likely to rely on the welfare system for simple survival. This affects every taxpayer in the nation.
- teen-age pregnancy is highest among school dropouts; conversely, pregnant teen-agers are most likely to drop out of school.
- a relationship exists, although not a direct one, between gang-related activity, drug and alcohol abuse, criminality and the dropout rates.
- decreased productivity by businesses relates to a dwindling pool of literate, skilled high school graduates.

- recent studies indicate that **male dropouts are three times more likely to possess and carry handguns** than students remaining in school.

The National Center for Education Statistics' recent report (September 1989) on the U. S. dropout rates underscores the seriousness and magnitude of the problem; nationally, only about two-thirds (2/3) of students enrolled go on to finish high school. In the New York City school system alone, more than 60 percent of the 300,000 students failed to qualify for a high school diploma within four years.

For minority students (Hispanics, Blacks) the dropout rates can be as high as 54 percent (Boston Hispanics) and 39 percent (New York Blacks) in some school districts; indeed, for the Hispanic and Black populations the school dropout problem is nothing less than a **NATIONAL TRAGEDY!**

Carlos' book includes a section he calls The Quick Reference Guides:

The Quick Reference Guides (QRG) published by ICA, Inc. are designed to provide efficient and rapid access to published material in education (K- 12) and other areas of national interest.

References in the QRG are numbered consecutively and arranged in chronological order:

82. *Dropout Darwinism: School Counselors Helping The Fittest, Abandoning The Rest;* Parsons, C.; Los Angeles Times, July 2, 1989.

83. *Tuning In To The Needs Of High School Dropouts;* Becker, G.S.; Business Week; July 3, 1989.

They are further broken down into specific sections:

The Hispanic Dropout Problem: A Matter Of Concern For Us All

165. *Make Something Happen: Hispanics and Urban High School Reform;* Hispanic Policy Development Project, New York, 1984.

How Officials View the Obstacles Facing Hispanics, Their Opportunities, and the Outlook for the 1980's; Hispanic Policy Development Project, February 1984, Vol. I *Moving Into the*

Political Mainstream.

Newspapers & Magazines

1. *Dropping Out: The Once and Future Crisis;* Thompson, B.;Christianity Today, October 17, 1986.

2. *Dropping Out;* Burnett Strother, D.; Phi Delta Kappan, December 1986.

Books

288. *Our Children & Our Country: Improving America's Schools & Affirming the Common Culture;* Bennett, W.J., Simon & Schuster, 1988.

Reports

119. *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative For Educational Reform;* National Commission On Excellence In Education; U.S. Dept. of Education, 1983.

In addition, a list of associations and information on how to contact them, is provided:

306. Accrediting Commission For Schools 1606 Rollins Road Burlingame, Ca. 94010 (415) 697-7711

307. American Association for Adult & Continuing Education 1201 16th St. N.W.; Suite 230 Washington, D.C. 20036 (202) 822-7866

Finally the QRG is also indexed according to author, in alphabetical order.

So, please take a few moments to familiarize yourself with the guide's layout; in doing so, you will save a lot of time which is, after all, the primary goal of the QRG series.

QRGs are an extremely valuable source of information for individuals who:

- Are doing graduate work
- Writing doctoral dissertations

- Preparing speeches and seminars
- Obtaining specific credentials and certification
- Preparing course outlines and handouts

And for agencies or individuals involved in:

- Grant proposal writing
- Annual contract reports
- Establishing policy
- 'Lobbying' for specific causes

REVIEW:

EDUCATING THE ENTIRE PERSON, pb. $8
Published by Ron Dultz Publishing
P.O. Box 985
Reseda, CA 91337
Written *and* reviewed by Ron Dultz

In the following three short paragraphs, I have summarized the book so that you can have an initial overview of its contents...

> **"One of the things *Educating the Entire Person* accomplishes is that it makes a major statement in defense of student rights and student needs, not forgetting that a teacher also has rights and needs. It points out the many ways a student's learning needs may differ from curriculum requirements, and the many ways in which curriculum requirements may be a hindrance rather than a help.**
>
> **Of equal or greater importance, *Educating the Entire Person* fills an important and neglected niche in education. It offers a comprehensive theory explaining the whys and hows of self-directed learning. It explains the primary method of teaching the self-directed student. It explains why self-directed learning is the preferred path of education.**
>
> **Also of significance, *Educating the Entire Person* provides encouragement and guidance for the purpose of enabling self-directed learning to be undertaken on a mass scale within a school environment for the first time."**

There is a specific reason why I am hoping my book will gain your interest. The reason is that this is a highly innovative approach to education and, consequently, it will not be quickly or easily accepted as a viable educational alternative. A positive review or presentation of some of the book's ideas in your publication will add to its credibility among professional educators, and will give it a much needed foothold with which to eventually build a following.

I am looking forward to hearing from you on the matters I proposed, and to discovering your reactions to *Educating the Entire Person*. I wish to thank you for the time and effort you may

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Invest in this submission.

Sincerely,
Ron Dultz
July 1, 1993

Excerpts from the book:
pages 9-14:

THERE ARE FIVE ULTIMATE OBJECTIVES WHEN EDUCATING OUR YOUNGSTERS

If a youngster's education is to be effective, and of enduring value, I believe that five ultimate objectives need to be accomplished. One of the five objectives is to make sure his education satisfies the requirement each individual has to evolve naturally, in accordance with his own abilities, inclinations, needs and growth patterns. Another of the objectives is that of equipping him with the skills to be self-sufficient financially and with the skills to be able to manage his own affairs by the time his circumstances determine, or his society mandates, that he must move out into the world as an autonomous being and begin fending for himself. A third objective is that of moral development. A fourth objective is that of assisting him in his efforts to develop a clear, precise and satisfactory identity of his own. And the fifth objective, which is the one that has long been favored in America, is that of enriching the student from a cultural standpoint and offering him a broad range of factual knowledge.

Of these five educational objectives, four are critical. The only one which can be left unaccomplished without serious detriment to a youngster is the one which has been favored by the American system of education: that of cultural enrichment and the acquiring of a broad range of factual knowledge. While cultural enrichment and the acquiring of a broad range of factual knowledge have definite value, they are not as important as the other four educational objectives.

If the American people are going to be healthy, happy and capable, our educational system from pre-school onward must fully address the problems of human development and the requirements of adulthood concurrent with attempting to transmit information and knowledge of various kinds. In our modern times, life is abrupt, and the safety and security of parental care does not last long after eighteen years of age; and our society, itself, has very little commitment to coddling us and protecting us after we have reached eighteen years of age. So our preparedness for life and our sense of ourself must be given a superb foundation while we are still growing up if we are going to survive in this world, and be a fit match for its demands and challenges. And, for most youngsters, there are only two places in which these things can be accomplished: in the home and in school; but parents are not professional educators, and may not have the ability, the tools nor the time to influence the development of their children in all the ways that are needed. It is, therefore, a proper and befitting job of our teachers and schools to take on these challenges; and, in fact, it is essential that they do so if America is going to be a strong society, and one which works in harmony with the needs of its people.

No effort should be spared in insuring that our young people will be *fully equipped* for supporting themselves financially and managing their own affairs by the time they have reached eighteen years of age, or by the time they are expected to fend for themselves and make their own way in the world. And no effort should be spared in insuring that the quality of their morals is evolving nicely at the same time. And no effort should be spared in insuring that the whole of their education coincides with their own needs, inclinations and growth patterns. And no effort should be spared in helping each youngster move forward in a sensitive and complex search for himself. To do less is to do our young people a great disservice; and will, indeed, endanger both them and our society. Since public and private schools are often better equipped for these tasks than parents, and already occupy a large percentage of each youngster's time, it is important that they (the schools) commit themselves fully to the proper development of the youngsters they instruct, and that they do so in a comprehensive manner.

Educating our youngsters in a manner that is in compliance with all five previously mentioned educational objectives, and paying the closest attention to the four objectives that are the most critical, would be a comprehensive and effective approach to education. However, since our current system of educating our young people in America is so heavily weighted in favor of cultural enrichment and the acquiring of a broad range of factual knowledge, and seriously neglects the other four educational objectives; the curriculum of the American system of educating our youngsters, and the teaching methods and teaching tools employed, must be critically examined; and, where necessary, reformed or replaced. This is easier said than done because the old ways of doing things and looking at them within the system of education that is predominant in America today are reinforced by years of tradition and habit.

Sometimes the only way of taking an honest look at something is by eliminating the customary way of perceiving it; and, some-times, the only way of honestly evaluating a procedure or practice is by having no prejudice in its favor. I find this rule to be most beneficial in coming to terms with many things; and, I have found it essential in trying to penetrate into the heart of what formal education should, and can, do for our young people in America today. So that I can have an opportunity to elaborate effectively on my concept of the five educational objectives, I will ask you, the reader, to temporarily forget all you have been taught about the role of the teacher and the role of the student. And I would like you to temporarily forget all you have been taught about the role of our schools and the nature of the educational process that occurs within them. If you will first do that for me, I then would like you to join me on an adventure in which we will explore a different way of looking at the educational process, and a fresh approach to educating our youngsters...

Let us start anew with the very first young pupils in the very first school. There are now no existing references for educating our children or young people. You and I are asked to design and implement a system for educating a small group of youngsters in their own best interest. We want to prepare the students for what life will require of them as adults, and for what they will require of themselves. We want them to end up being adults who are self-sufficient, happy and capable, who have integrity and good character, and who will contribute to the well-being of society; or, at least, not detract from its well-being. Let us assume we are given the right to influence these youngsters, who are from five to eighteen years of age, six hours per day, five days per week; and let us assume that we are provided with salaries for ourselves, school grounds, a schoolhouse and money for teaching equipment, books and other tools of the trade. And we are given full and complete responsibility for the education of these youngsters. How will we proceed, and what will our educational objectives be? Well, I'm not sure how you will proceed, and what your educational objectives will be; but I know how I will proceed, and what my educational objectives will be.

My educational objectives will be far easier to decide than my procedures for implementing those objectives because implementing them would depend upon the particular requirements of each student I am instructing, and upon his responses to the items, methods and tools of instruction I am using for that purpose. I recognize that the educational items, methods and tools I employ, regardless of their merit, are useless unless they can be adapted to the needs, inclinations and growth patterns of my students. Each young student is a human being who exists in a certain form. He has certain thoughts, emotions, needs; and certain capacities, abilities and inclinations. If I am to be successful in instructing, I must do so in a way that is suitable to each individual youngster; and the more successfully I can relate to each youngster's individual learning needs, the better educator I can be. I realize that I cannot hope to instruct any youngster effectively unless I become the servant of his most urgent and pressing educational needs. I realize that I will fail badly in teaching anything if I do not pay close attention to each youngster's individual learning needs and requirements, and work within that framework; regardless of how well equipped I am as a teacher, and regardless of how good my school grounds, schoolhouse, teaching equipment and teaching tools are.

Now that I have established the framework in which I shall teach, I am ready to concern myself with the substance of *what* I shall teach the youngsters. Rather than begin with specifics, I wish to establish general educational objectives that I feel are most appropriate and beneficial for the youngsters; and, afterward, I will figure out the specific items of instruction and the methods and tools I will employ to try to convey those to my young students.

As an instructor of the total person, I consider the society in which I live in order to determine what will be required of my young students upon completion of their studies because I want, to formulate their studying objectives with that in mind. I determine that the society in which the youngsters I am to instruct will be growing up demands that each youngster be fully capable of supporting himself financially and managing his own affairs by the time he reaches eighteen years of age; or by the time he has completed his formal schooling, whichever occurs first. This is a glaring fact, one I cannot ignore if I am to be a responsible caretaker of the overall development and educational needs of the youngsters I am to instruct. And so, one of the central objectives of my instruction will be to provide each student with strong money-making skills and a thorough preparation for managing his own affairs and fending for himself in all the ways that will be required of him once he has reached eighteen years of age, or is required to go out on his own in the world. I realize that if a major portion of the educational process from age five through age eighteen is devoted to this, each student will have learned a lot about getting along on his own in the world by the end of that time, and should also have acquired legitimate money-making skills; and, as a result, would be able to enter the world at age eighteen equipped and confident, instead of a mere burden to himself, his parents and society. Instead of feeling helpless and worthless, like many young adults do, he will have dignity and pride, and the foundation for making a good life for himself. He will be able to start life as a capable person, making a real direction for himself; instead of as an incompetent one, at the mercy of everyone and everything within his society.

As an instructor of the total person, I realize that it is essential for each of my students to develop a satisfactory and well-defined identity of his own. I also realize that a student may acquire a great deal of facts, information and skills; yet if he does not have a satisfactory and well-defined identity of his own, he will not be an effective person, or a happy one. I understand that developing a well-defined and satisfactory identity of one's own is a complicated, sensitive and personal process, but one in which a teacher who is knowledgeable about life may play a part. Consequently, I will make a special effort to contribute to this aspect of each of my student's education, and I will make sure that I am never responsible for distracting my students from accomplishing this most important mission.

As an instructor of the total person, I delve into everything that I am, and have learned about life, to determine what great morals and values I must impart to my young students; and I decide that all of them can be summed up in one word: character. I realize that information, knowledge and skills serve no purpose if they are not embraced by someone whose character is strong and good. Consequently, the inculcation of good character must be an essential part of my teaching if it is ultimately going to go for a good purpose. From the very beginning, then, I will spare no effort in helping my young students grow into people who are strong, good, kind and wise. I will take special pains in pointing out to them that all knowledge is to be used for the ultimate purposes of: living a fulfilling and constructive life; being good to people and making their lives better; and advancing all the things that are honorable, good and beautiful in life.

Lastly, I will try to imbue my students with a broad range of factual knowledge and with the cultural refinements of life, so that they will have as much as possible to select from in fashioning their lives; and in living them in an enlightened, sensitive, thoughtful and artistic manner.

These, then, are the five teaching objectives I will assign myself as one of the very first teachers in the very first school; which, as you can see, are the original educational objectives I presented at the beginning of this essay. The rest of the details of instructing the youngsters I am to teach, as to methods and items of instruction, and the type of instructional tools and equipment to be used, are of less importance; and I can attend to them in good time.

We can now return from this foray into an imaginary setting, for I have made the points I intended. I wish to thank the reader's indulgence, and ask that we now move on to additional aspects of my theory of educating the entire person.

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pages 99-103:

UNLEARNING AND RE-EVALUATING

Without unlearning, learning could not take place. Unlearning is the art of finding, rooting out and disposing of those things one has absorbed, learned, or is inclined to be that are found to be inappropriate to one's thoughts, feelings, circumstances or lifestyle; or that are found to be surpassed in quality by things which may replace them.

Learning and unlearning can be compared to the doing and undoing of things. If a person ties a knot and decides to untie it, it is likely to be more difficult than tying it, as we all know. If a man flies from America to Japan and decides he wished he hadn't; to undo it, he has to fly back. If a person throws something away and decides he wants it back, he is likely going to take more time and expend more effort in retrieving it than in discarding it. Unlearning is just the other side of learning, as undoing is the other side of doing. But, for some reason, we never think about that side of the education coin. Yet, if a person is going to learn to be kind, he may have to unlearn the reasons for his cruelty; and if a person is going to learn to read enriching books, he may have to unlearn his habits of reading pornography, etc.

As often as not, the learning of something is dependent upon the unlearning of something else. Just because both memory and the ability for involvement are limited.

Sometimes the need for unlearning arises in the form of an emotional obstacle toward learning, such as just not feeling like learning. If this happens, the negative feeling would have to be unlearned if learning is to take place.

If a person feels like learning, but his support for some of the aspects of his current habits or lifestyle will not permit him to, or interfere; he has to unlearn giving them his support if learning is to occur, or if it is to occur as he would like it to.

If a person wishes to learn a particular thing that replaces or contradicts something else in his mind or life, his support for the old will have to be unlearned if sane learning is to take place.

In learning a skill, or undertaking learning which requires a skill to be able to do it, old habits of mind may have to be unlearned. For example, if a hard-core businessman, seldom given to expressing his feelings, wanted to become an artist, he might first have to unlearn some of the habits of mind of an inveterate businessman.

It is a common belief that things that are learned are done so by the mind only; and that, if the mind chooses to forget them, it simply tells them to go away, or casually drops them in the nearest junk pile or wastebasket. But that which has been truly learned, either in an academic sense, or by absorption, or by habit, is a part of a person. It is not in his mind only. To propose that it is makes a mockery of learning. He breathes it, feels it, thinks it, talks it, sees it, and hears it. When he wakes up in the morning, he sometimes finds it greeting him hello. When he reads the paper, it may float across the page. When he is sipping his afternoon tea, it should not surprise him to find it staring up at him from the bottom *of* the cup. When he looks up at the sky, he might see it superimposed on a cloud. He can discard it no more easily than he can discard a part of himself. In unlearning, then, one must alter oneself in some way.

So as not to underestimate the difficulty of unlearning, a person should keep in mind that what he is includes not only what he has learned through absorption and academic learning, but also what he feels and what he does; and he should realize that all these things are intertwined. Let us look at a criminal, for example. A criminal thinks and feels like a criminal. When he looks at a woman, he is more likely to see her pocketbook than his heart. When he walks along the road, he may well be contemplating some aspect of his next 'job'. When he hears a tune on the radio that is peaceful, he may think of the happiness he can gain from stolen dollars. And a carpenter... A carpenter thinks and feels like a carpenter. The rhythms of his pounding stay with him into the night. When he looks at his surroundings, he has a good eye for wooden structures. When a conversation takes a bent toward his trade, his interest perks. But there is more... A man who screams often at his wife screams often in his mind. A boy who frequently takes his dog on lazy walks often goes on lazy walks in his mind. A person who has a lot of fun sees the pleasant side of things. A person who is very often sad sees the dark side of things. A person who feels lonely walks along deserted roads in his mind. A person who feels self-pity puts a cage around himself in his mind, and refuses to offer himself the slightest crumb of mercy.

Upon realizing that we really are what we have learned, what we do and what we feel, and that they are all intertwined, a person can begin to look at unlearning with sober intentions and expectations. He will not feel that what he knows, what he does, that he thinks or what he feels can be unlearned without incurring consequences to his daily activities. He will not think that can unlearn something without finding some type of replacement for the space in his life that it filled, even if that replacement is the willingness to do nothing. He will not think he can earn something if there are things in his life very dependent on it for their support without exerting great effort.

All the things that we think, feel and do are things that we get to know and understand; so that, after awhile, they become old friends of ours. We learn their idiosyncrasies, their needs. We work hard at finding outlets and avenues for them, and at discovering ways of pacifying them and cooperating with them. When there is a better way of thinking, doing or feeling that crosses a person's path and teases the person's interest, the old way will become jealous and flaunt its appeal. It will say, 'I am the old way, the proven way. You must have faith in me. Give me time to show you what I can do, and you will not be sorry. Can you think you see all my possibilities when looking through the window of your negative attitude toward me? When was it that I disappointed you? Tell me, and we shall discuss it. Don't you remember the times I helped you? When you had nothing to do, you often called upon me; and I always made myself available to you. Often you sang praises of me. When you let me lapse into the rear of your life, you found yourself shocked at how lost you were without me. If you think you do not need me at this moment, it is because the time is not now that you need me; but that time is coming soon.' And when a person begins to acquire a new interest in something, so that his attention is being drawn away from his usual activities, one of his usual activities will say to him in disgust, 'Why have you discarded your head pillow and replaced it with a foot pillow? My dear man, you do not think with your feet! Protect your head, not your feet. You have lain your head on me so long, you think that I am a part of your head; and that is why you think you can abandon your previous usage of me. But if you look more closely at the facts, you would not dare to do so. And that which you are aspiring to blend into your life at this time shows no promise of worth. It is but a good act by a good actor." Or the usual activities will transform themselves into lonely, unclothed children in the winter snow, and beg him for mercy. They will make him feel ashamed of his neglect. Or the usual activities will transform themselves into protagonists, and hurl at him stark new challenges to entice him back. Or they will bargain with him as the most clever of businessmen, offering great yields at half the usual investment, and new sources of borrowing at low interest. And they will act in unison, showing the needs of each of the usual activities to be the fortress and inspiration of the others. So a person should approach unlearning heavily armed. He should count on struggle, rather than hope there will be none.

That which indicates to what extent learning or unlearning is in order is reevaluation. A healthy person has a continually shifting consciousness, which perpetually combines learning, unlearning and reevaluating in everything it does. It is constantly examining the way one looks at things and associates with them: reevaluating; it is constantly active at increasing the basic foundation of one's intellect: learning; and it is constantly looking for reasons for, and upon finding them, practicing disassociation: unlearning. The pliability of such a mind is its greatest asset, enabling one not to resort to a static approach to life.

When this type of equality is given to learning, unlearning and reevaluating, things are seen bathed in the light of their alternatives and potential, and life has got to be much more alive than otherwise. It is only those who, once they have learned things, do not unlearn, reevaluate and continue learning who find themselves in mental ruts.

We really cannot expect to stumble onto the right way of doing something the first time, or the proper understanding of a thing in our first conceptual image of it. And it stands to reason that the longer we work at a thing, the better we will become at it; and the longer we conceptualize something, the closer we will get to its true essence. These are good reasons to place great emphasis on the value of unlearning and reevaluating, good reasons to give them a status in education equivalent to that of learning. And if we are ever to change an old way of doing things, or an old thought or deleterious mood that has been ingrained by habit, it is precisely these: unlearning and reevaluating, that we must look to for assistance. This is yet further reason to give them a status in education equivalent to that of learning.

It would be a great comfort to me if, when I asked a person what he was doing with himself, he were to tell me that he was busy unlearning, or reevaluating his actions, thoughts or feelings about things. This would show me that he did not have a prejudice toward learning, which is truly only one side of a two-sided issue: reevaluating being the mediator.

If these three concepts were to become a part of the culture of society, I would run into many people who were unlearning, or who were reevaluating their actions, thoughts and feelings about things. Perhaps some would be unlearning some things, reevaluating others and learning still others at the same time. Such would be music to my ears, and I would feel that a truly meaningful approach to education had a foothold.

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And Ron also sent on the following beautiful, colorfully illustrated prayer on a separate card:

A Prayer

Grant me the courage to strip off all my pretenses, and be imperfect before the eyes of the world. Grant me the purity of heart to love someone for who and what they are, even if my love is not returned, and my only reward is the honest exercise of my feelings.

Grant me enough faith to continue to pursue a beautiful, honorable and noble path in life, even when my most recent efforts have failed, and my prospects seem bleak, and my rewards seem insufficient.

Grant me a sound mind with which I may confront life's dilemmas, and not be confused by them; and grant me a pure soul so that I may wade through any cesspool of corruption or greed, and not be tarnished.

Grant me the kindness to sympathize with all who suffer and to care about all who are less fortunate than I; and may my own rights and privileges be taken from me before I am permitted to add to the hurt and harm of this world.

Grant me the perception to spot every scrap of good, every hint of sanity, every spark of genuineness and talent, and the will to encourage those things with all my might so that they may strengthen, and grow, and triumph.

Grant me the vision to see beyond my own current limitations, and beyond the inadequacies of my environment, and beyond the imperfections of those people who have disappointed me so that I will always be able to peer into the world of people and things that are good, and true, and beautiful, and just.

Grant me the wisdom to pursue a sound policy or direction even when everyone else wishes to dilute its value or undermine its meaning.

Grant me the self confidence to pursue my chosen path in life though I am hounded by doubt, ambushed by failure and misunderstood by others, if my destiny truly lies at its end.

Grant me a joyful attitude so that no sadness or misfortune will prevent me from cherishing and enjoying all the good that life has to offer.

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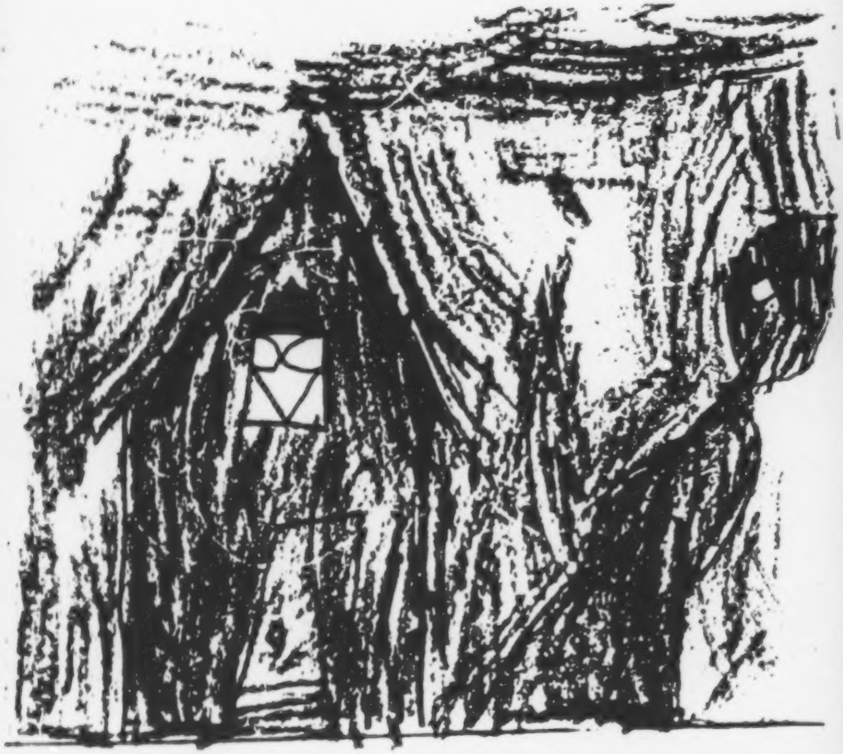
A STORY:

Human catcher

by Ian

To myfriend Tony
who alwys asked
what was rong



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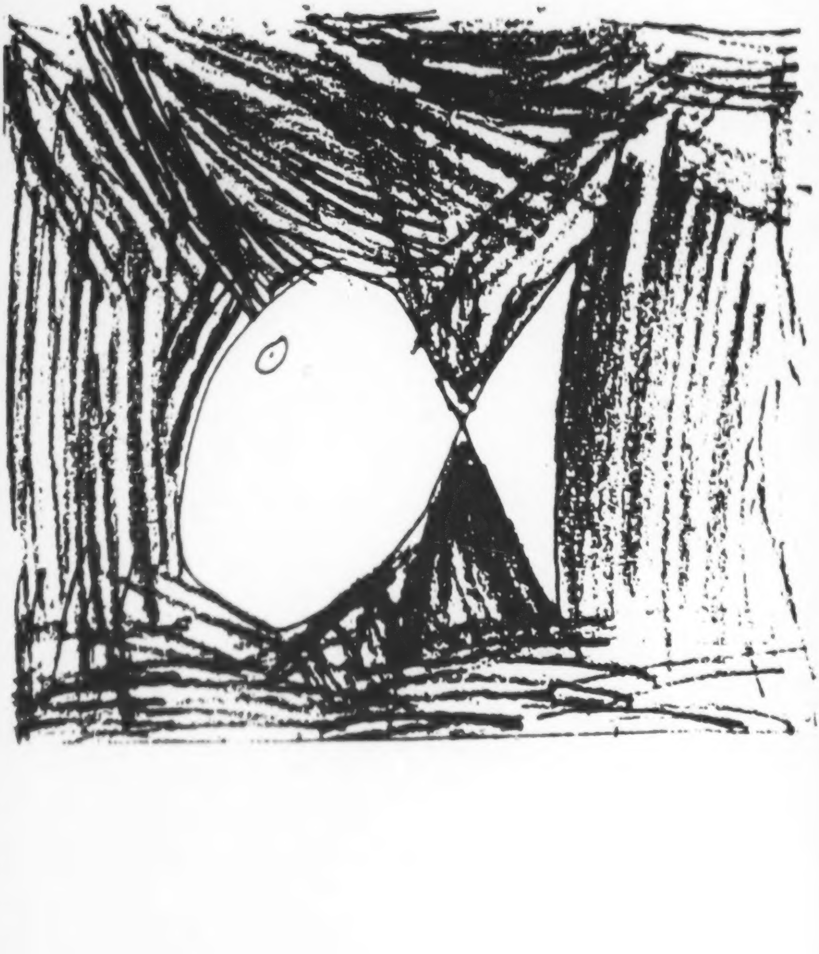
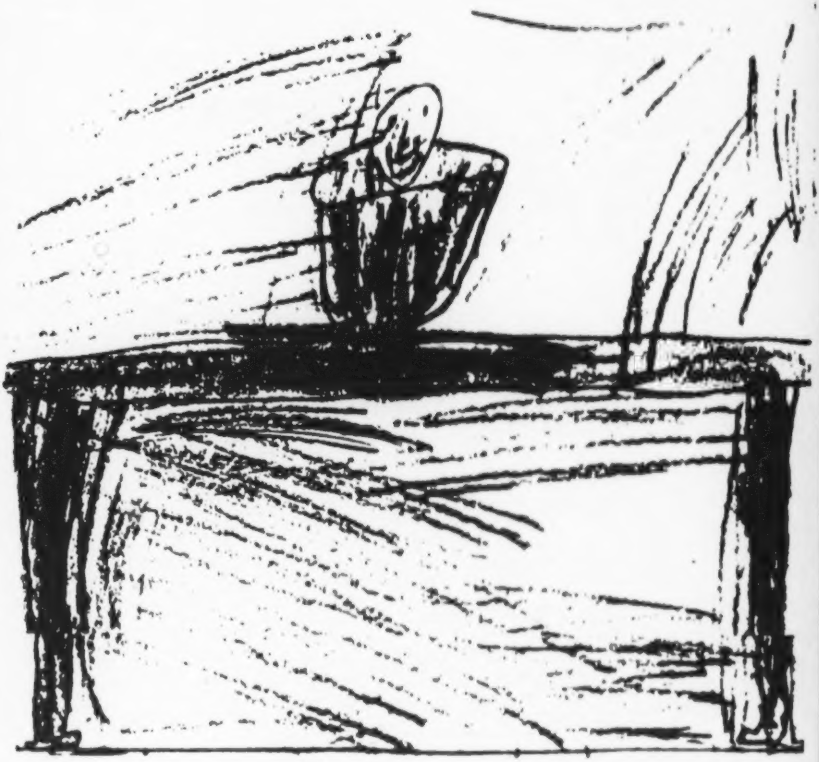
Once upon a
time there was
a fisherman
that lived near a
lake. One day

he was fishing
when he saw a
bill in the water.
He reached out
and picked it up.

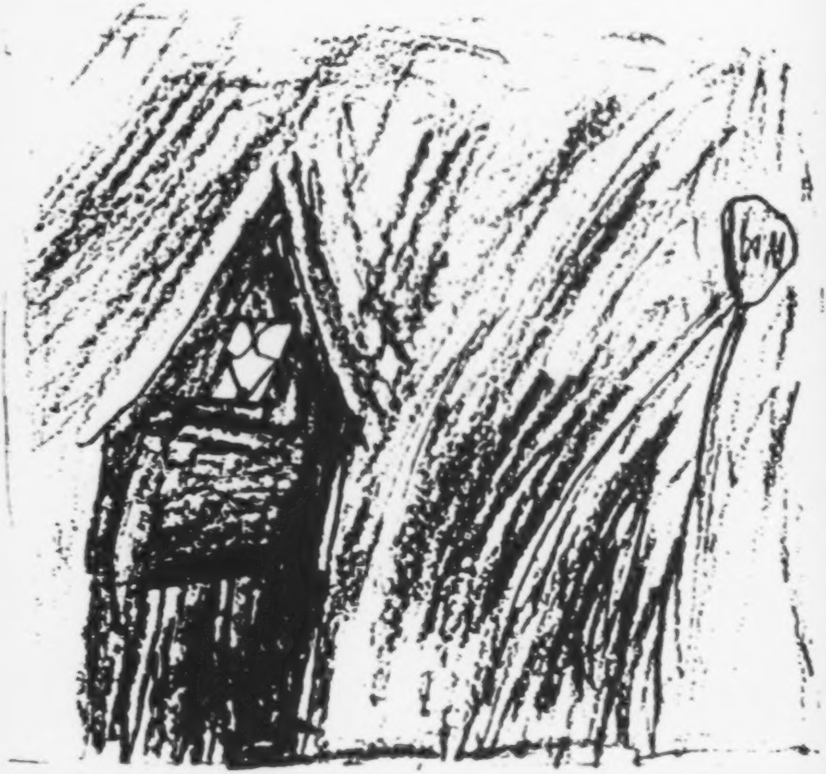


175

Ouch! His hand
stuck fast. He fell
in the water. He
saw the bill on
a fishing pole. There
was a big fish.



They put him
on a table. He tried
not to look scard.
but really he was
scard. Suddenly
he looked up. (that



was a big mistacke.)
There was a big
black mouth. He jumped
up swam out of the
water stumble. to shore
ran home and never

fished again.

ADVERTISEMENTS:

Date: October 7, 1993
Organization: Joyful Child Inc.,
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Contact: Dr. Peggy Jenkins, 602-951-4111

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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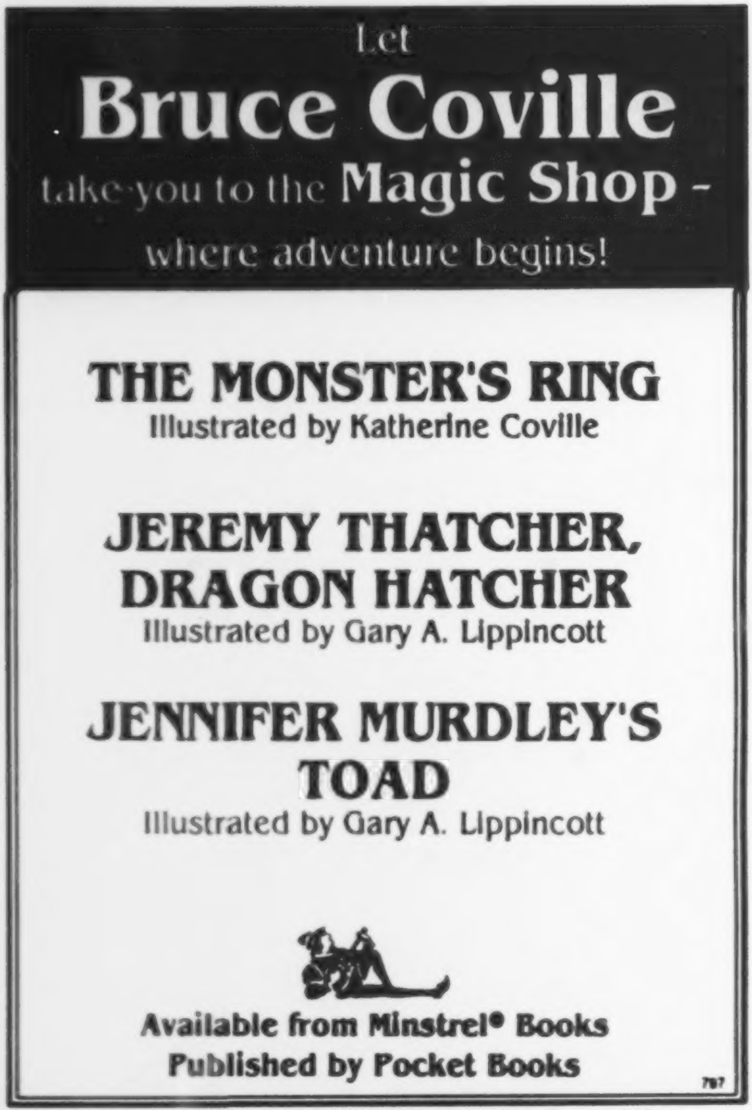
Joyful Child Inc., a nonprofit educational service organization, is now offering a long-awaited training seminar for parenting workshop leaders. Qualified applicants will receive licensing and opportunities for conducting JOYFUL CHILD PARENTING CLASSES throughout the United States.

'Catch the Vision', A JOYFUL CHILD LEADERSHIP TRAINING SEMINAR, will be led by Dr. Peggy Jenkins, noted author, educator, and founder of Joyful Child Inc., November 12-14,* in Scottsdale, Arizona. Attendees will be licensed to conduct Joyful Child Parenting Classes following the intensive week-end session.

The training is based on Jenkins' award-winning book, ***The Joyful Child: A Sourcebook of Activities and Ideas for Releasing Children's Natural Joy.*** Classes apply universal spiritual principles and ageless wisdom teachings to the parenting process. Based on a new paradigm for the present age, they go beyond simply altering behavior and attitudes by nurturing and activating the natural joy in children and the child within all of us.

Registration fee of $295.00 includes extensive resource material, training manuals, and licensing fees for an exciting new business opportunity. Space is limited; for information about Leadership Training Seminar registration, call Peggy Jenkins at 602-951-4111 or write P.O. Box 5506, Scottsdale, AZ 85261.

** Although the dates for this particular training have passed, I urge you to contact Dr. Jenkins to find out when the next one is scheduled to take place. Ask also about her magazine,* ***Joyful Child,*** *which is a treasure trove of delightful resources and inspirations. Notice especially that, in spite of its location, in one of the richest little cities in the USA—Scottsdale—the price for this training is not inflated!*



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DISCOVER TODAY'S GREAT IDEAS IN EDUCATION

GREAT
IDEAS
IN EDUCATION

Resource Center for Redesigning Education
P.O. Box 298, Brandon VT 05733-0298

During the past decade, the campaign to 'restructure' American education has led to wave after wave of commission reports, legislative mandates, and a bewildering array of reforms in curriculum, instruction, administration and the preparation of teachers. But often there is no sense of purpose, no clear educational vision guiding these efforts, other than the threatening imperative to keep our nation 'competitive' in a global economy. Policymakers and leading educators too seldom consider fundamental questions, such as 'What purposes should schooling serve at this time in history?' or 'Which human potentials should be cultivated through education?'

We at the Resource Center for Redesigning Education believe that any genuine and lasting 'restructuring' of schools must begin with a careful rethinking of the goals and purposes of schooling itself in a world that is dramatically changing.

We have selected the books and videos in the catalog, not to promote specific instructional techniques or curricular materials, but to engage educators and educational policymakers in a thoughtful examination of essential educational, cultural, and moral issues.

Some educators have begun to address these issues, but their voices are scattered among various organizations and schools of

thought under many different labels. In *Great Ideas in Education,* we have brought these voices together, many for the first time. In their different ways, these thoughtful and concerned educators are all calling for an educational process that is democratic, learner-centered, and holistic.

• *'Democratic' education promotes fairness, compassion and community* rather than a morally blind focus on production-oriented competition; it celebrates the wonderful variety of human expression and talent rather than seeking to homogenize society or give privileged status to some. It invites all people to become active participants in the process of building community and renewing society.

• *An education is 'learner-centered' when its primary loyalty is to people* rather than to an economic system. The real lives, experiences and interests of human beings have priority over abstract ideologies or a technocratic interest in standardization, classification and control.

• *'Holistic' education recognizes the complexity of human life* in its aesthetic, cultural, global and spiritual dimensions. It recognizes that human existence is a quest for meaning, and meaning arises only in context, in terms of connections to the natural world, to culture and community, and to archetypal, transpersonal layers of experience.

We believe that these are the truly 'great ideas in education.' These are the ideas that will provide a new vision—or better, visions—that our educational systems so desperately need in this time of social malaise.

Each issue of the catalog highlights one or two of these 'great ideas' and, through in-depth review essays, discusses a number of books and videos that explore these ideas. Other materials will be grouped according to other 'great idea' themes and described more briefly.

We know you will find these materials to be professionally valuable as well as intellectually exciting. They will surely challenge you with new ways to think about teaching, learning, and schooling.

Ron Miller, Ph.D.
Editor, *Great Ideas in Education*

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Wilhelm Reich at Orgonon, with baby son Peter

ΣΚΟΛΕ

The Journal of Alternative Education

Sugaring at the Farm: Chris and the kids

Summer, 1994, Vol. XI, No. 2

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ΣΚΟΛΕ ("Sko-lay," meaning "school" as defined by the ancient Greeks, an activity conducted on an on-going basis, as part of the awakening of awareness and contact with one's world) appears twice a year. It publishes articles related to the subject of alternatives or innovations in education, critiques of other forms of education, theoretical considerations associated with schools, schooling, learning and teaching, as well as accounts of individual schools themselves and "how-to" articles. We welcome manuscripts by educators, interested by-standers, parents and thoughtful students of all ages. Interesting photographs showing activities connected with learning/teaching are in great demand. I used to say they wouldn't be returned, but I haven't been getting any at all - so now I will, I will! Please send me some pictures!

Material to be submitted for publication must be received by the November 15 and May 15 deadlines. Manuscripts will not be returned unless extreme emotional blackmail has been practiced by the author, and should be typed with nice black type. Best of all, put them on a Mac, and send us a disk! Send your material to Mary Leue, 72 Philip St., Albany, NY 12202.

Subscription rates are: $15/yr. for members of the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools or subscribers to Jerry Mintz's networking newsletter AEROGRAMME, $20 for non-members. For institutions the rates are $20/$25. For overseas subscription, add $10/yr. for mailing. Send international money order, please, or something else that can be negotiated in the U.S. Back issues of ΣΚΟΛΕ may be ordered from the above address, at $ 8.00 a copy.

Cover pictures: Sugaring at the farm: Chris and the kids

ΣΚΟΛΕ

the Journal of Alternative Education

Vol.XI, No.2
Summer, 1994

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the Journal of Alternative Education

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● THIRD BERKSHIRE LIVE-OUT ●

—Double-check the dates—

✎ *Write them down !!* ✎

Sunday, July 24th through Saturday, July 30th

✱ LET US PLAN, WORK, LIVE TOGETHER FOR A WEEK! ✱

The cost is still $5 per day per person, small children half price. There will still be tenting down in the orchard, and the option of bringing food to share in the big farm kitchen. Many distinguished presenters will be coming and going throughout the week representing a wide variety of educational models including private-, public-, alternative- and home-schooling. You may come for as long or as short a time as you choose, and we will be letting you know who is coming when and for how long so you can choose! And if you would like to be a presenter, give us a call! And remember, please, that

"We're all bozos on this bus!"

and

"We must all hang together or we shall all hang separately!"

(Which, freely translated, means, we're *all* experts on our own children's learning needs and capacities—and, we need each other's very special and particular views, experiences, strategies, eloquence, ideals, goals, information, if we are to solve this national conundrum for all of our country's children!)

Preliminary sign-up: Name: ________________ # coming ______

Address: ____________________________ Phone: ____________

Comments :

Here are some snapshots taken at the first two Live-outs:

FIRST BERKSHIRE LIVE OUT 1971

Second Berkshire Live-out 1993

Kitchen at the farm

Talent show

Mary and friend

COMMENTARY

OPINION SURVEY OF ΣΚΟΛΕ READERS:

I sent out a questionnaire last December and again in February to subscribers I was writing to about sub renewals. The answers I got back from a goodly number were very helpful and informative. I would love it if you would also send me a note expressing your own concerns. Thanks. OK, here's what I sent:

I'd love it if you would fill our the questionnaire that follows! Thanks. I really want to know how I can make ΣΚΟΛΕ better, more relevant to your concerns. If you already did, forgive the repetition!

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Are you still concerned about educational issues in general? What kinds of concerns do you have? Do you still hope alternative education can help bring about reforms? Please add an extra sheet if you don't have room enough to express yourself fully. I promise to read prayerfully anything you send me, even if I don't necessarily agree or even like it!

2. Will you write me an article? Want to see your name in print? in a library? Want to immortalize your school/experience/views on education?

3. Do you see any relevance for ΣΚΟΛΕ in bringing innovative ideas to the attention of involved, enlightened people? What would help make ΣΚΟΛΕ more relevant, in your opinion?

4. How much of ΣΚΟΛΕ interests you? What do you particularly like? How much of it do you actually read?

5. Does anything about ΣΚΟΛΕ really turn you off?

6. Does the cost of a subscription get in your way? If you were thinking you couldn't possibly afford it, would receiving a complimentary subscription allow you to continue suscribing? I

have received a small grant which makes a few such offers possible, but obviously, if you can manage the cost (or even part of it), you will be helping me keep ΣΚΟΛΕ alive. I trust your good will here.

7. Any other comments you'd like to make?

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE:

John Boston:

1. I am very concerned with educational issues in general. My son's family is now one boy 3 years old and one girl 2 years old. Will he homeschool? His wonderful wife was not so it remains to be seen when the time comes when their children must enter school.

I do not see alternative schooling as a means of reforming the present school system. It is too entrenched in its bureaucracy to ever reform. I do see it collapsing from it's own tax weight on the general population. I hope it can be a smoother transition than what our country went through moving from the agricultural age to the industrial age. We are moving so much faster now into the information age that it could be very disruptive to our economy—as was the great depression of the 30's. If alternative education can move away from schooling and into learning based on science and technology then it could have an impact.

2. I don't really have the time right now to write you an article for ΣΚΟΛΕ but may in the future.

4. I like articles that address learning but not schooling.

5. What has turned me off from ΣΚΟΛΕ, NCACS and many other organizations is the petty conflicts that have very little to do with helping people learn.

6. Cost does not bother me. An annual publication, very professionally done would be more readily used by me as a reference. I will be sending in my subscription to NCACS soon and will include ΣΚΟΛΕ.

Elizabeth Quigley:

1. I keep working on alternative education here in PA. We held a small training conference this year. Also doing prisoner advocacy, with educational issues.

2. Would love to write for you but am concerned my points would be like preaching to the convinced with your readership. ***(Well, I really don't think so. We're all so different, we all have a lot to give each other, I believe.)***
3. Keep ΣΚΟΛΕ going!!
4. Lots. I read all of it.
5. No.
6. Subscription check enclosed. Plus $5 for additional copy of Past Changed Keep up the good work, Mary! Hope to see you soon.

Elizabeth Wertheim:

1. Yes, similar to you—I want freedom, individual curriculum, democratic setting, loving adults.
2. Not ready yet—you're doing great.
4. Sometimes I read it from cover to cover. I like experiences and insights from places that are working!
7. Do you know of Wondertree in Vancouver, B.C.? Thanks for the good job with Pearce's *Evolution's End*.

Joyce Moss:

1. I think our public education system is "broken" beyond repair. I envision our children being contributing, intricate members of the community. How can they learn to live and function as a contributing member of their community when they spend the formative years living in an artificial, fragmented classroom?
2. I'm not very good at hanging word on my ideas/ideals. I'm better at being a support system for others—don't have anything vital to say!
4. It all interests me. It helps me (us) keep our dream alive; i.e., keep focused on our ideal.
6. I can manage the cost, but with difficulty—I am disabled on a limited income, but I have a need to pay for it myself.

(Editorial note: I could print out Joyce's very poignant and vitally significant words—yup, I've still got 'em on disk, Joyce!—as witness against her own undue modesty! She and I "met" via EARTHnet some years ago, and all I've ever known of her has come from her words giving voice to her ideas/ideals! They blew me away! Some day I want to meet this special lady! Thanks, Joyce.)

Emanuel Pariser

1. Yes and no. I don't know any more about "Big" returns. Too many of us are too comfortable to risk changing. Small changes, slowly gathering together may reach critical mass, and "Boom" we'll get a "Big" change, but I'm not holding my breath.
2. Sure. ***[Gonna hold you to that one, Em!]***
3. Perhaps the involvement of "public sector" advocates. The people in the National Dropout Prevention Network: the Arnie Langbergs, etc.
4. I usually read about half of each issue right away and keep the old issues around for further perusal. I like dialogue (i.e., Ron Miller and John Gatto) I like personal revelation. ***[me too].***
6. I'm OK at the moment, thanks.
7. Thank you, Mary Leue.

Hey, thank *you*, one and all! You *are* the journal! I'm just the editor. I couldn't even do that if my son Bill hadn't sold me his scanner cheap! It's people like you that give me hope to keep on keepin' on.

As editor of this tiny journal, I confess to wanting every one of your opinions, ideas, ideals, theories, experiences!! Actually, especially lately, I have been having a heck of a time deciding which articles to put first, which ones follow next, and so on through the list! They're all so relevant, so great! This role of being editor has become increasingly almost an embarrassment of riches! I want to put many—sometimes *most*—of them in the place of honor at the top of the list! "Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished for"—to coin a phrase, but it's still painful to make the choices! Marshall McCluhan's dictum that "the medium is the message" is at odds with the non-sequential value of this material! Sometimes the editorial role feels almost like playing God—but without God's qualifications! Well, I think I'm doing a little better than I used to (Denks Gott for de spell check!), and I most assuredly love the job enough to keep on keepin' on working to do better! I absolutely love show-casing these offerings, honoring the people who created them, one and all! The good news is that I have this "problem" of a plethora of precious material because I am totally in love with it—and with the authors of it!

So in the end, what I do is to "follow my bliss," to quote Joe Campbell. I responded with my gut to the lead article, which is based on the 20th anniversary annual report of the Community

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School in Camden, Maine. The meditative musings of Bill Halpin on the nature of power at his school come first because they strike me as being so *foundational* to the nature of the institutions we in the alternative education "movement" are struggling to bring into being. We are, or need to be, I believe, focused on creating schools which *work*, as Elizabeth Wertheim says above—in other words, which actually perform the task they were created to accomplish: namely, to support and empower children to grow as full human beings within the safety of the "container" provided by the "space" of the institution. Doing this involves developing and constantly sharpening our awareness of who we are and how we are doing what we do. That is the only way I know of if we are to avoid re-creating the ever-present danger that *any* institu-tion—not just one run by the "bad guys,"—can become a self-per-petuating center of narcissistic survival for administrators and employees alike, as John Gatto points out so clearly!

I do really believe that there are many possible roads to the accomplishment of this task, and in my opinion, each institution will mirror the circumstances, motivations and personalities of the people who found and occupy them, and will be doing the right thing in so doing. For example, the model used by Shinichiro Hori (pages 28-32), according to John Potter 2, which combines Summerhillian and Deweyan principles as a proposed alternative to traditional Japanese state schooling, for example, makes a great deal of sense to me! In 1992, Chris Mercogliano and your editor visited a regular village state school in the tiny fishing village of Nichinan on Kyushu, and were very favorably impressed by the quality of teaching being done, the spontaneity and enjoyment level exhibited by the children, by the skill and enthusiasm of the teachers, and by the evident high level of learning being carried on by all concerned. To me, this was confirmation of John Potter 1's comment (included in *Challenging the Giant, volume II*, pp. 79-82) on the relationship between the size of a school and its ability to engage children educationally, leaving aside the issue of traditional versus innovative methods used, or even that of self-government versus guidance from "above."

When one considers the strength of the Japanese upbringing, the evident capacity Japanese people exhibit for complex exactitude and innovative adaptation of the technological advances made by other countries, as well as their own developments, it may well be that such hybrid models will help the Japanese society to make the bridge to more personal freedom than strictly a Summerhillian model—at least in their own country. One is struck, among the Japanese people, by the contrast between their love of hierarchical order and their personal warmth and respect for individual differences! Truly, a para-doxical culture when viewed from the perspective of America's!

But enough editorial ruminatings! The contents of this issue speak far more eloquently than I could ever hope to do!

Anon,
Mary, ed.

PROFILED SCHOOL:

THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL, Camden, Maine— now celebrating its 20th year!

"WHO'S IN CHARGE AT THE C-SCHOOL?"

by Bill Halpin

This year we asked, "Who's in charge?" Black-and-white thinkers said, "the co-directors." Mythical thinkers said, "the consensus of the staff group." Classical thinkers asked for the organization chart. Colorful thinkers said, "the students, the time of day or term, the mood of the staff on duty, the chemical ingredients of the dinner menu, the daily personality of the administrative assistant" or even whether the Board had good pastry and coffee for their meeting, whether the tutors on their night liked what they were wearing. The paranoid thinkers among us stared and believed they were the only ones who didn't know the answer.

The question "Who's in charge?" is as testy as it is a genuine inquiry into the underlying philosophical dynamic that drives the school. The question led to making a list of the various "authorities" functioning at the school. The list was long. Staff were surprised. It ranged from one staff on duty alone to all staff together at Thursday meeting, from one co-director alone to two co-directors together, from a group of students on a wilderness camping trip with two staff to all the gathered at Group Rap voting on a community issue, from the Board in its overview to a few students in the music room with a good idea. The list led management thinkers to suggest a situational and eclectic authority. Anarchistic thinkers already suspected chaos and random whimsy determined what got done. Indigenous thinkers doubted whether any decision would last even a few weeks.

What is the authority of the C-School? Can it be named? What label affix to it so to own and tame it? The year went by, and the 20-year-old school could not settle on any word to capture what has worked well in the life of the school and those touched by it. Poetic thinkers try two suggestions:

1. It is nameless. Moses got no name but a vague response when he asked Divinity its name. The response Moses heard

might be adapted to suffice the C-School's search: "You shall be there, as who you are, shall you be there." I suggest that the authority structure of the C-School is continually co-created and demands everyone be present in all manifestations of their character. What this means concretely at the school for students and staff, Board and tutors, employers and families, friends and enemies is: Show up, present yourself as you are there and then, and co-create the reality of the school. If you are angry, be so there. If you are enthusiastic and optimistic, fine. If you are depressed and sad, be that there. If creative, yes. If disillusioned and disappointed, yes again. If mistrustful and wounded, please. If bossy or cranky, mellow or funky, organized or lost—welcome! These varied manifestations of who and how we are gives the school its authority.

2. It is fantastic. The Greek word *phantazein* means "appearance, imagination, to present to the mind." The reality of the school is determined anew each term by whatever experience is brought and whatever intelligence is found there. It is never the same. It is not a system. It is individuals.

I suggest the school's reality is *delabelized authority*. I suggest the answer to "Who's in charge?" is "Who is there, really there!" It is a matter of *presence*. As such, all are invited to come as they are, to show their face.

Until now I never met an annual report I could love! But this one—like the people of the school it reports on—is different! Read on!

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1993

Report from Co-Director Dora Lievow

The School's twentieth anniversary year has come and gone. It seems a time for telling stories of where we've been and where we're going and thinking about what we do. It was a perfectly timed year for the publication of the first book about the School, a collection of interviews with former students. In her forward, Deborah Meier enhanced my own understanding of our work. She answered a question I've been living with for many years asked of me and Emanuel by Jean Bamberger: What is the connection between the cognitive development fostered at the School and the psychosocial growth achieved by students? How does the kind of teaching and learning we do in classes contribute to their development in other areas?

We understand more readily how attentiveness to interpersonal issues frees up students academically and how the program's structure enhances students' ability to learn.

We know from Piaget that, developmentally, "thinking" occurs in actions long before it occurs in language. As Eleanor Duckworth explains, one of the essential aspects of pre-verbal cognition is the seeking of consistencies. "Human beings are born with a guiding intellectual rule that might be stated: 'All else being equal, things will turn out the same.'" Luckily, we inhabit a physical universe where this is generally the case, but the physical world is perhaps the only world we can count on in this way. Our interpersonal environment can be very different.

If consistency is an essential condition of thinking, then learning to think about things requires order in the most profound sense of the word. When a student improves her reading comprehension by three levels in fifteen tutoring sessions and when another student is unable to make any progress in classes for two months and then suddenly "gets it" the month after she finds a steady job, we smile at each other during staff meetings and say facetiously, "Boy, are we good!" What we mean is just the opposite. We know no teachers can attribute change of this magnitude to their own gifted teaching. It's the School as a structure— an orderly, comprehensible arrangement of people, process, and purpose—that gets the thinking going again.

Debbie Meier notes the feedback loop of this process: "What shines through (from the stories of formers) is that they have developed the habit of being unsentimentally reflective....They have a past to tell about and...their way of putting the pieces together gives them strength, endurance, and...two unshakable beliefs: the power of intelligent thought and the importance of being responsible."

It's exciting to see students master math and reading skills and engage in conversations about literature, history, and science. It's even more gratifying to imagine that the habit of reflective thought fostered in classes at the School can inform the lives of students long after their formal classwork is over.

How the School Works

The Community School is a residential school for 16- to 20-year-old high school dropouts. Eight students live at the School for six months during which time they must hold jobs in the community, pay room and board, and attend classes six evenings a week.

Established in August of 1973, the School is state approved and designed to teach students not only academic skills but skills that will help them to take care of themselves in a practical sense. Most importantly, students relearn ways of relating to adults and to each other that enhance both community life and individual potential. Those who complete the program successfully are awarded a high school diploma.

After a two-week trial period students are assigned a staff member called their 'one-to-one.' Students meet with their one-to-ones weekly to discuss personal and practical issues. This experience often forms a close and enduring connection between student and staff member.

Students work a minimum of 28 hours and pay $55 for room and board weekly. Although their jobs may be physically hard and the pay low, they learn the connection between earning money and the pride of supporting themselves and a job well done.

One-to-one tutoring in the School's informal setting often restores a positive attitude toward learning. Each student's academic history, learning style, and interests are considered. In addition to the mandated academic subjects, the School's curriculum covers many challenging areas of personal growth and learning. Students attend classes in parenting, substance abuse prevention, conflict resolution, sexuality, and self esteem and may choose electives in assertiveness, nonviolence, and relapse prevention.

Cooking, cleaning, and menu-planning are required courses. Students wake up with their own alarm clocks, budget their own money, launder their own clothes, and arrange their rooms. Once a month they go camping. Trips include climbing, canoeing, hiking, ropes courses, and participating in outdoor science and geography labs.

Students deal with interpersonal issues and rule violations at Thursday night Group Raps with the School consultant and staff. Consequences for rule infractions are suggested, usually by students, and everyone votes on the outcome. Group Rap is also a forum where students can discuss their feelings and air personal concerns.

REPORT FROM CO-DIRECTOR EMANUEL PARISER

Funding:

1993 was an extraordinary year for the School in terms of finances. As the State of Maine grappled with a billion dollar projected deficit, the School faced a season in which nearly a third of our parents were unemployed, School Districts had run out of funds for alternative education placements, and cascading interest rates resulted in less scholarship aid from our endowment funds. As more applicants joined the waiting list, less public support became available to them.

In the face of these hardships many people and organizations rose ,to the challenge—the many families of students who re-arranged a large part of their finances to support their children, the foundations which came through with emergency scholarship support—**the Nellie Mae Fund for Education, the Paul Foundation, the Fisher Foundation, and the Davenport Trust**—and the members of the legislature (thanks in particular to Pam Cahill, Chellie Pingree, Anne Larrivee, Beverly Bustin, Walt Whitcomb, and Rita Melendy) who helped restore 2/3 of our funding from the Department of Corrections which was again threatened and cut for the third year in a row.

Without the ongoing grants and scholarship support from our individual annual donors and the **United Camden/Rockport Charities**, the A.K. **Watson Charitable Trust**, and the **Camden Foundation**, the School would have plunged deeply into the red. Even with this support we had to delay acceptance of several total scholarship students by six months, in one case by a year!

Finally, as this year pulled to a close we received two special surprises—employees of **The Foreside Company**, Camden, chose the School to be the recipient of their annual fund-raising donation and MBNA, Camden, gave a generous gift towards refurbishing and renovating our home.

Getting the Word Out:

Our biggest news is the long-awaited publication of our book by the University Press of America, Lanham, MD. *Changing Lives: Voices from a School That Works* was written by **Jane Day** with photos by **Maryanne Mott**, foreword by **Deborah Meier**, and copyediting and layout by **Marty King**. Along with interviews of

40 graduates, the book presents a brief history and philosophy of the School which I wrote.

One of the most gratifying aspects of putting this work together has been the response by readers who submitted 'blurbs' for the book:

Senator George Mitchell, 'The common sense and the uncommon compassion of the Community School has improved hundreds of young lives and enriched the surrounding neighborhoods;'

Dr. **Robert Coles,** Harvard, 'I was moved and most impressed by those life stories exactly what all of us need to learn from those we teach, who in turn teach us;'

Herb Kohl, "I urge educators and parents to read this unique and intimate book which provides a multidimensional look at a successful school and the students who benefited from its work;'

Dr. **Julius B. Richmond,** former Surgeon General, 'The stories of these young people have much to teach us concerning resilience and hope. And the program of the Community School suggests options which the nation should be applying on a much wider scale;'

Lisbeth B. Schorr, Harvard; 'These stories ...provide encouragement to those who are engaged in the daily struggle of supporting high-risk youth and challenge those who maintain that no intervention from outside the family can help;' and

William Ayers, University of Illinois, 'The experiences of these students...demonstrate again and again that what young people want and need is relatively simple...a community to belong to, something worth-while to think about and to do, responsibility and acceptance, someone to love them, and others to care about.'

See a review of Jane Day's book on page 178, and Emanuel's letter on page 188 for the address of the University Press of America which published Jane Day's superb tribute to thirty-eight of the children who came to the Community School in crisis and stayed to learn and to grow! **Changing Lives** ***is a magnificent account of how this miracle came about in each case, and of how the school itself works to being it about! The decision to center the book on the lives of these (ex)children is an echo of everything about the Community School which—like Sudbury Valley School in Framingham, Massachusetts—like Summerhill in Leiston, England, explains its tremendous success.***

In my own terms, the ingredients for such success would be the school's small size, its person-centeredness, the commitment of both staff and students, balance as an experiential measuring stick and standard for conduct, willingness to delay gratification as a personal lesson to be learned, hard work on the part of everyone! As such, these criteria sound a lot like what Scott Peck mandates as necessary ingredients for "success" in the therapeutic process, in the community process, in spiritual growth. Reading these thirty-eight stories brings what is theoretical into reality. As the subtitle of Jane's book says, this is "a school that works!" For me, the fact that this success reaches children whose families have no other resources to turn to makes it special!

Congratulations to the folks at the Community School! To paraphrase the Russian school children's song

("Let the sun shine forever,
let there be sky forever,
let there always be Mama,
let there always be me!"),

Let there always be the Community School!

THE PUZZLE

Someone who keeps aloof from suffering
is not a lover. I choose your love
above all else. As for wealth
if that comes, or goes, so be it.
Wealth and love inhabit separate worlds.

But as long as you live here inside me,
I cannot say that I'm suffering.

—SANAI

Reprinted from* The Hand Of Poetry: Five Mystic Poets Of Persia *translated by Coleman Barks #OP01, $12.00, Omega Pubs., 1993.

PROFILED SCHOOL:

STONESOUP JOURNAL

by Dan Huston

While I was doing research for my thesis, *Curing Anti-Life: Is Summerhill the Remedy?,* I sent letters to all the free schools for which I had addresses to ask for assistance. Being about to graduate; considering teaching as a potential career; and having enthusiasm for the free-school philosophy; my letter also mentioned that I was interested in teaching at such a school, and asked if they had any suggestions.

Debbie Uthe, of Stonesoup School Inc., responded with a three page letter, describing the school, offering to help me with my thesis and stating that my working there was a possibility. I bought a train ticket and headed down to Florida for a week to see a free school in action.

Stonesoup is, according to Jerry Mintz, the only free, self-governing boarding school in the country. It was founded about 20 years ago and is patterned after Summerhill.

The school is located on 52 acres on which is a lake, a garden, some rabbits, chickens, and roosters. All of the buildings are built and maintained by students and staff. When I went there, there were only six students and three staff members, although there have been up to 30 students. None of the students were attending any classes while I was there. All but one, however, was involved in some sort of independent study.

Debbie picked me up at the train station in a small town called Palatka. As we left Palatka and headed towards Stonesoup, the surroundings became more and more farm-like. On the way, Debbie made several comments which made me feel that the school was even more rustic than I had thought.

After about an hour, we turned off the highway and onto a dirt road. Then we turned onto another, and soon we were at the school's driveway—what could easily have been mistaken for a logging road. The driveway led straight to the school's main building, 'The Dome'—a huge, makeshift building that looked like a silver whale lying on its stomach. It was covered from top to bottom with sheets of tin.

Although the biggest open space here is not even the size of a softball infield, the woods are not New England woods.

There are tall pines, but many shorter trees as well and many plants with long narrow leaves grouped together like a fan. There are many squirrels, roosters, and chameleons. Most of the buildings don't even have glass windows.

What follows are segments of the journal I kept while I was there.

-

13th March - Friday, 9:18 pm

Well, I'm here. I'm in my guest quarters, a small, geodesic dome.

I didn't get much sleep on the train, so I was pretty much sacked out when I got here. It's rustic. The shower has hardly any pressure; the inside of my quarters is cardboard; the main dome's outside it, tin, tin, and more tin. The buildings are scattered throughout the woods with footpaths connecting them. There is electricity but no running water in the living quarters. There is a washer and dryer (the dryer isn't working at the moment). The bathtub is rusty, I wouldn't want to use it. There is, however, a good-size lake with a small beach and canoes.

The kids are really friendly. As soon as I woke up from my nap, they asked me if I wanted to play frisbee. We played Ultimate for a couple of hours. Then they showed me around the place until we were called in for dinner.

Dinner is prepared every night by one person; students and staff take turns with the preparation, except for Dean—the man who has been here the longest. He has his own kitchen and makes his own meals there.

The students each have a big crate and are responsible for ordering their own food. Breakfast and lunch are "fend-for-yourself" meals, except in the fact that diet is monitored. A vegetarian diet is stressed. Meat portions are limited, as are eggs.

I only saw Dean once today and that was only because I happened to walk by his kitchen window. He was friendly. I was on my way to take a nap.

"Sleep good," he said.

Dean collects things. He has piles of junk in yet another dome, two old school buses, and a log cabin.

Saturday 7:17 am

It's a crisp morning, feels like fall. The roosters (there are eight walking around) are "roostering." Yesterday, when I was trying to take my nap, they were a pain, this morning its kind of nice to wake up to. I feel like I'm at camp. I know I would like to live here for a while, but I'm afraid that I might get restless, and, because the money is so bad, trapped.

Tuition at the Stonesoup is $160 a month. However, the staff members feel that private school should not only be available to a select few and work with people to arrange a figure that fits their budget. Consequently, not every student pays full tuition and the school is low on funds. The staff members get free room and board, car insurance, gas money, and a weekly stipend of between $20 - $45, depending how much the school is bringing in. There is no health insurance for the staff, but the school helps to pay for any health costs it can afford. (It is now helping Tim to pay for three surgeries he had done on his eye, which he injured while working on a school van.)

I'm trying to remember the kids' names. Jeff, 17; Bobby, 16; Mark, 13; Shane, 11; Donna, 11; Molly, 20; Steve, 21; Adam, 3 and a half.

For most of the students, this is their first year at Stonesoup. This could explain why they are not showing much interest in going to classes. Neill explains that students who come from other schools initially avoid lessons; however, these kids have been here longer than the average 'recovery time' of three months. Jeff, Bobby, Shane, and Donna are all here because of family problems. Mark is here because his mother believes in the philosophy. Molly is learning-impaired and goes to public school during the day; she lives at Stonesoup to develop living skills. Steve is autistic. He simply lives here as well.

12:39 pm

I've been hanging out with the kids all the time. I have no idea what the adults have been doing. Right now, everyone is on clean-up duty. The Saturday chores consist of cleaning the game room, the bathroom, the shower/laundry room, taking out the trash and composts, etc.

The fact that the kids are responsible for cleaning and cooking is quite different from Summerhill where they hire people to do those things. In a sense, the children here at Stonesoup are not as free as those at Summerhill.

The kids and I have been playing frisbee, volleyball, guitar, singing, and taking walks. They are all very open and fun to be with. I asked the two oldest, Jeff and Bobby, if they ever felt there was something they wanted to learn that the school was unable to teach them. They said no. However, I don't know if that's because they have expressed a desire to learn many things and the school was able to help them do it, or if they rarely take the initiative to learn anything.

I asked Jeff and Bobby if they wished there were more kids here their age, and they quickly said yes. They said they get irritable with each other.

"We sleep together, shower together, go to the bathroom together," said Jeff. "We're bound to get on each others' nerves."

Bobby and Jeff share a two-room shack together. They want a car so they can go into town more often.

Mark and Shane also live together (with Steve). They are almost always hanging out together as well. It's nice that they have each other. I feel bad for Donna who doesn't have any girls her age to be with. She lives with Molly and they are friends, but Molly is not around during the day and so Donna does not have any girls to play with. She gets picked on a lot.

Debbie says that Mark cannot read. His mother is adamant about wanting him to choose what is right for himself. He is a very bright kid. We played Hearts with Debbie and Tim, and he played very deliberately. He is outgoing and active.

This brings up another issue with free schools. One wonders how often learning disabilities, such as dyslexia, go unnoticed.

There doesn't seem to be much motivation to learn here. What reason would these kids have to learn anything besides cooking, cleaning, wood-chopping, some carpentry skills, computer skills, and some car maintenance skills? It all seems very anti-academic.

I suppose the raw learning that goes on here (cooking, wood-cutting, etc.) and the rustic lifestyle that goes along with it does get these children (and staff) in touch with the human animal. This is valuable I think.

The strength of this school, and the free school movement in general, is learning to live with others, to claim your space, to know what you need to function effectively and not trample on others. I became more and more aware of this as I did my research. Academics takes a back seat to this.

1: 15 pm, Sunday.

Just had a long talk with Dean. He's a very calm man with a large beard and a pony tail which hangs through the back of his baseball hat. I'd say he's in his mid 50's. He's been here since 1971. The place was already going when he came but hadn't been around long.

He emphasized that many staff members never 'land' here. They're following other leads and branching out in other directions, spending all their time on the phone or writing letters. I see that danger within myself.

He would like to see a family move here, a husband, wife, and child. He thinks the best staff are family members because their perspective towards all the kids changes. He sees education as a tool; what he really looks for in staff is 'where their heads are at.'

Dean left school when he was in the 11th grade. He pretty much taught himself how to read. He sees education as domestication, teaching people how to 'moo.'

He admits some students have left here lacking some fundamental academic skills but maintains that they know themselves and are balanced people. Others have their own business and careers. One ex-student got a scholarship to attend Oxford University. Dean's two children were schooled here. 'None of the graduates are in jail and all are alive.' These days, that's saying something, he says.

Dean's car was donated to him. The vehicle repairs are done by a local mechanic in exchange for metal that Dean finds at yard sales and the like. The school does what it can for its staff.

'Don't get hurt when the school's broke,' Dean said.

11: 02 pm

Just got back from Debbie's. We all watched 'Back to the Future.'

Today was another fun day: football, swimming, guitar playing, singing. I hung out mostly with Bobby and Jeff.

Donna and I played a game of chess. I was teaching her how to think about strategy.

'You have to think about why you want to make that move and the consequences of it,' I told her. 'If you don't, you might end up in check-mate. Or maybe that move wouldn't put you in check-mate, but you might have a better move.'

It felt familiar, as I had been thinking all day about life plans. What if I join the Peace Corps? Maybe I should just come to teach at Stonesoup? What about my debts? Stopping to acknowledge this parallel, made me realize that the games the children play here do help to develop critical thinking skills. Debbie told me they make it a point to play games that involve thinking and are not simply a matter of luck.

Monday 2:30 pm

They need 15 credits to graduate from high school. Each class is worth a half credit per semester. All the kids are getting home economics credit for their cooking, cleaning, and chores. They also earn psychology credits through their meetings. They sometimes have opportunities to earn credits doing carpentry, working on the buildings at the school, or helping with the vehicles. If they want to, they could get heavily involved with the gardens and the animals.

Because of a social-service agency ruling, the school cannot be as lenient about sexuality as the staff members would like to be. The agency declared that no school can endorse or encourage sexual activity among its students. Bed checks are required.

Debbie regrets having to comply with the agency's rules. They force the staff to take an authoritative stance against sex and threaten to make the children less open with them—more prone to lie and cover up. I believe, like Neill, that repression can only lead to trouble. With the emergence of AIDS, free schools face even tougher policy decisions surrounding the issue of sexual freedom.

Today, Jeff expressed an interest in independent studies for the first time. He wants to study math, science, English, and social studies with Debbie. The students can choose to work with any staff member they want. Aside from using Tim's computer to learn typing, all the kids who are doing independent studies are doing them with Debbie. Debbie is working hard to make more available to the kids. She agrees with me that the school lacks resources and that more staff and students would make for a better environment. She is doing what she can. The school is advertising for staff.

I think my presence here has disrupted things a bit. My being here has made for a long week-end with more games and distraction from studies, as well as provided entertainment.

Stonesoup does not have weekly meetings. Here, meetings are held when somebody calls one, by ringing the bell three times. The bell is used for other things as well. One ring, followed by a person's name means that that person is to come to the dome. Two rings means there are visitors. Four rings means it's dinner time. And five rings means it's time for clean-up.

Consequences for bad behaviour are decided by staff and students. A common consequence is restriction of going to town. Staff members make at least one trip to town a week and often take students with them. The town trip can be anything from shopping to a day at the park. With the school being so isolated, students long to go into town to get away for awhile. This punishment does not fit the crime. I think more appropriate punishments could be used.

Mark and Shane broke a rake and didn't own up to it. A massive search was done to find the rake. It finally came out that they had broken it, using it as a hammer. Their town privileges were taken away, indefinitely. It is up to them to call a meeting and put forward their case when they feel they have earned their town privileges back.

Although swearing is allowed, Debbie requested that it not be done around Adam since he is learning to speak. The kids decided on their own to fine anyone swearing in the presence of Adam $.25. This money is used to pay for movies and the like. The only time that swearing is allowed in the presence of Adam is during meetings. The meetings are to be as open and uncensored as possible.

A couple of days ago, Mark and Shane tied Donna's jacket on top of the basketball hoop. She has complained periodically about it, but has never called a meeting. The boys and she made an agreement that they would play a game of chess and the loser would have to get the jacket down. This was not a smart agreement for Donna to make. She is just learning how to play chess and cannot climb well enough to get the jacket down. She ended up walking away from the game before it was over. No adult has intervened because she has not used her authority to call a meeting and resolve the issue.

Later Mark and Shane took Donna's Vaseline and were playing 'keep away' with it. Donna was chasing them, yelling 'Stop!' I was there and thought it was a cruel game. I did not know whether or not I should get involved. I finally told Shane that it was one thing to play 'keep away' play with someone's personal belongings.

I talked with Tim about it later and asked him if I was overstepping my bounds, given the philosophy of the school. He said no but also told me about their 'Stop' rule. If someone says stop, the others are to stop doing whatever they are doing that is bothering the other person. When Donna was yelling this, Mark was responding that she never stops when they tell her to stop. This, according to Tim, does not justify its continuance. If 'Stop' doesn't work, call a meeting or get a mediator, staff or student.

Tuesday, 10:02 am

Mark and I are playing chess. Apparently Mark, Shane and Donna have decided that Donna will get her jacket down from the basketball hoop. Dean needs the ladder and orders Mark to get it down "Now!"

"But we decided she would get it," Mark protested.

"And I'm telling you to get it. I need the ladder," Dean says menacingly, definitely claiming his authority.

Last night was an eventful one. Tim was feeling "devious." (as Jeff put it). He hid Jeff's bike and Bobby's STOP sign, tied Bobby's door shut and screwed Jeffs door shut. Jeff woke up and caught him in the act before he got more than one screw in the door. Bobby broke through his roped door.

All this was in response to Bobby and Jeff taking one of Tim's tires off his car and putting it on the basketball hoop with Donna's jacket. This was in retaliation for Tim's hiding Jeff's bike. Who knows when all this began?

10:43 am

At this point I feel like a half-guest. They still insist that I be served dinner first (the kids that is). Last night, I swore in front of Adam in the heat of a game of Hearts and no one said anything. I feel like I should have been fined like anyone else would have.

12:43 pm

The kids here are by no means immune to bickering. Freedom has not cured them of childhood squabbles. In fact, because they are largely left alone, the bickering is quite constant. Yet there have not been any meetings called since I came. This, apparently, is unusual. According to Debbie, meetings are typically called once or twice a week.

Contrary to Neill's claims—that no children look to see how he votes at meetings and that he is outvoted most of the time—Debbie finds that the adults here are given more respect and the children tend to regard their opinions as wiser and more informed.

However, recently Tim wished to restrict use of the kitchen. The kitchen was being left a mess and Tim was sick of it, so he called a meeting suggesting that the kitchen only be open during certain hours for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, making it easier to monitor who makes what mess. All three staff members were in favor of this rule. The kids protested saying they didn't want to have to get up at a certain time, and that it was an infringement on their freedom. Bobby suggested that, to eliminate the staff having to track down who made what mess, it be up to whoever was making dinner that night. If the place wasn't clean before he or she started cooking, it was his or her job to find out who made the mess, or clean it up. This is the rule now standing even though all three staff members were in favor of Tim's idea.

6:44 pm

Finally, a meeting was called! It was jointly called by Debbie and Mark over rough-housing. Mark had just gotten hit in the eye with a soapy dish towel, and Debbie was sick of all the screaming.

Shane had screamed in pain while Jeff was hurting him, causing Adam to throw a skateboard at Jeff.

Jeff then told Adam he was "bad," upsetting Debbie who doesn't want that sort of value judging language used to discipline her child. She also doesn't want Adam to get the impression that being a big boy means hurting people.

Jeff and Bobby maintain that Mark and Shane provoke rough-housing and then scream "Stop!" before they even get hurt.

All these opinions were thrown back and forth. Everyone had a chance to say what they wanted to say. The result was restating that there is to be no rough-housing in the Dome.

Jeff and Bobby were told to be aware that they are in fact sometimes hurting Mark and Shane, and to try not to. Mark and Shane were also told not to scream if they were not being hurt.

I wonder if not having a set day and time for meetings results in having mainly disciplinary meetings. There had been rumblings for a day or so that a meeting would soon be called, and when things got too much someone finally rang the bell. The meeting's objective then was primarily resolving the issue of rough-housing between the two sets of boys.

Wednesday 1 :30 pm

Just got done having another talk with Dean. I told him that it didn't look like I'd be coming here next September, but maybe in a couple of years when my debts were paid off I would get back in touch with them. He said he hopes the place will still be here.

Dean is very cued in to kids' behaviors. He sees that, because Donna is the person who acts out all the time and gets the most restriction, the other kids police her, trying to catch her and draw attention to her to conceal their own mischief.

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After witnessing Dean's commanding Mark to get Donna's jacket, I felt compelled to ask him when it was that he claimed authority. He claims it in dangerous situations or when he feels he is being infringed on.

I think I understand better what Dean meant when he said some people never really land here. There seemed to be a contradiction. On the one hand, he was entertained that the ones asking to play games all the time are the ones who need to develop interests of their own. On the other hand, he was saying that you can't be half here and half not, that this life demanded all of you. Then again, he was saying 'you have to claim your space,' and nobody here has claimed their space more than Dean has. What he meant when he said some people never landed here is that some people don't make it their home. Some people never claim their space and get settled. Much of your time here is your own.

As I sit here, slightly bored, not wanting to play games with the kids and not having much else to do, I think to myself, 'this is how it would be if I were a member of the staff here.' The difference is that I would have my belongings here. I could write, read, play guitar, draw, etc. Sure, if a student wanted me to teach him or her something I would have to be available, that would be my job, but the bottom line is that I would have to live here, for that's what this place is about, living.

Thoughts On Free Schools

It is obvious that I have maintained a certain optimism in regard to free schools. There is something beautiful in the theory that human beings are born good and sincere, and that, given the opportunity to live freely, they will grow to be responsible, peaceful, and useful members of society. To me, there is a certain degree of security in such a view of humanity.

One is reminded of the Renaissance and its faith in the goodness of man. The tragedy of the Renaissance was that while some were creating masterpieces of art, sculpture and architecture, others were living lives of poverty, filled with hardship. It is unfortunate that free schools are only available to those who can afford to send their children to them. I respect Stonesoup for adjusting the tuition rate with regard to parents' incomes; However, the result is that the school lacks resources. Until these schools qualify for federal or other significant funding, these problems will continue to exist.

What are the chances of freedom in education becoming mainstream? Much of what Neill spoke out against has changed.

The strap is no longer used in schools. Orthodox religion is less common. Sexuality is less repressed than it was. With influences from people such as Carl Rogers, freedom is making its way into the classroom. While Summerhill strives to improve its academic offerings, many public schools are trying to pay more attention to students' individuality. In the United States, people are fighting for the improvement of the public educational system.

At this moment in history, the United States is in a pivotal position politically and economically. Many changes in the health care system, the transportation system, energy policies, and education, to name a few, could happen in the next couple of years. Freedom in schools could rise significantly. From the increase in the number of free, democratic schools, it is clear that the slow influence Neill hoped Summerhill would have on the world is happening.

This excerpt from Dan Huston's undergraduate Humanities thesis is reprinted from the* Summerhill Trust Journal *for Christmas, 1993.

MIRACLE ON 45TH STREET

by Lydia Green

Nine years ago PS 51 was a war zone.

Gun-toting parents barged into classrooms threatening teachers. Fistfights broke out daily in the lunchroom between kids. One time, staff members found themselves locked out of the building by irate parents who had put epoxy glue in the locks and door jambs. 'It was crazy here,' said Evelyn Segal, a fourth-grade teacher, 'I was so frightened I used to sit with a baseball bat under my chair.'

Today, peace and order reign supreme in PS. 51, a 100-year-old elementary school on 45th St. between Tenth and Eleventh Aves. With its narrow corridors and green and gray checkerboard marbleized tiles, PS. 51 has the old-fashioned feel of a Norman Rockwell schoolhouse.

Polite Pupils

Kids raise their hands and ask permission before going to the bathroom or dumping their trays after lunch. Classroom seating is assigned. Talking is discouraged in the lunchroom.

But it is also a school where the principal, John Economides, knows every kid by name and the favorite refrain among teachers is 'Show a child respect and you'll get respect back.' It's a school where kids feel free to walk into the principal's office to complain about the neighborhood bully. And at P.S. 51 everyone—including the teachers—wears a mask to school on Halloween.

How this turnabout was accomplished is a testament to John Economides, who was only 36 years old when he was appointed principal in 1981. A Greek immigrant, who spoke no English when he arrived in New York at age 11, Economides credits the school's success to an orderly, well-disciplined environment, and the existence of high expectations for each and every child.

Punish And Reward

'We are trying to make our kids competitive with middle class children from a more stable home environment,' said Economides. 'We may not be able to solve their home problems but we can try to compensate.' A strict disciplinarian, Economides holds to a simple brand of justice. 'I believe in punishing those that transgress and rewarding those that are good,' Economides said. He has never had to suspend a child in the nine years he has been principal.

The turnabout of PS. 51 also reflects how much can be done with so little. Sixty out of the 300 students live in hotels and shelters. Ninety percent of the kids receive free reduced lunches. The school has neither an auditorium or a gym. Some children have parents in jail or on drugs.

PS. 51 also suffers from high student turnover—since September, 153 new students have been admitted, another 92 discharged.

The fact that Economides lived in the neighborhood and taught there for many years helped him win over the loyalties of parents. 'Some of the kids were the children of students I had taught when I was a junior high school math teacher,' Economides said. 'Since the parents trusted me it was easier to institute changes. Having grown up on West 38th St. where 'you had to be tough and crazy to survive,' Economides knew how important it was to restore law and order to the school.

Single File

To cut down on lunchroom brawls, Economides initiated procedures requiring kids entering the cafeteria to walk down one staircase, those leaving to go up another. Parents were no longer permitted free access to classrooms. Locked gates were installed in the schoolyard. Economides also started a practice which he continues to this day—eating lunch with the kids. In the entire time he has been a principal, it is a daily ritual he has never missed.

'Before John was here the school had a nasty bullying environment,' said Dennis Eder, a teacher and United Federation of Teachers representative.

'The effect of John's presence in the lunchroom is enormous,' said Segal, who has taught at PS. 51 for 20 years.

Basic Skills Stressed

The acquisition of basic academic skills are a top priority at P.S. 51. 'Our feeling was that for our kids, the area they needed the most work in was reading, writing and mathematics,' Economides said.

Music, art and theater programs are deemphasized. 'Art programs are like icing on the cake,' said Eder, 'but first you have to have a cake.'

'I don't believe in a particular reading philosophy or program that might be in vogue,' said Economides. He avoids hiring based on resumés or test scores, preferring teachers he has personally observed in a classroom situation. 'Any system can work if you have the right people,' he said.

Teacher's Choice

Teachers at PS. 51 are free to use whatever teaching methods and instructional materials they want. In Marguerite Lawrence's fourth grade class, for example, students learn to read from the 1956 edition of the basal reading series, *New Streets and Roads*.

Basal readers assume that children learn to read through mastery of a series of basic skills in a stepwise fashion. The whole language approach, a new trend advocated by Community School District 2, presumes that children learn to read if immersed in activities such as writing stories, reading books and newspapers, listening to books on tape and performing in plays.

But some, like Gwendolyn Moore, a first grade teacher, emphasize basic skills like phonics, spelling and punctuation in the classroom.

'Schools like ours have such basic deficits,' said Eder. 'Until they're addressed the frills aren't going to make a difference.'

Marked Improvements

The academic results wrought by Economides' changes are astonishing. In 1981, P.S. 51 ranked 23rd in reading scores in District 2, with 22 percent of the students reading at or above grade levels. Last year, the school ranked ninth in the District, with 65 percent of the youngsters reading at or above grade level.

Any additional funds received from federal and state programs to improve reading scores are used to reduce class size rather than hiring supportive staff for special programs. Economides thinks that students benefit more from reduced class size than from 'pull outs,' the term used to describe the practice of pulling kids out of their regular class to receive remedial instruction.

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'Every time you pull a child out of his class you are disrupting that child's day,' said Economides. 'Speech and reading specialists who pull a kid out an hour here or an hour there may do some good,' said Eder. 'But reducing class size is better because teachers get to know the kids more intimately by working with them on an ongoing basis.'

Recently, the school received a $50,000 grant from the 'Rewarding for Success' program. The money will be spent over the next three years on the purchase of multiple sets of children's books for each classroom.

'Reading's Boring'

In spite of the improved reading scores, most of the students in Evelyn Segal's fifth grade class would rather watch cartoons like Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles or Chippendale's Rescue Rangers than read. 'Reading's boring,' said two boys. Rambo was a class favorite and practically everyone was dying to see Sylvester Stallone in *Tango & Cash*.

Parent involvement is considered extremely important at P.S. 51. Every September, parents are sent a copy of the teacher's schedule so they know when the teacher's free period is. But parents who stop by at odd hours are not turned away. 'I'm not about to let a parent walk away who has never come to the school before,' aid Economides. He has also arranged for a social worker from the Red Cross Shelter, where many of the kids live, to come in on Fridays.

'Most of our kids don't have a father,' said Carmen Cerrato, a mother of two and President of the PTA. They need a father figure and they get that at school.'

Children also get nightly homework assignments and parents are required to sign their kids' notebook. Economides makes a point of phoning parents who don't.

Discipline All Around

Economides is as strict with the teachers as students. Teachers who hand in reports late are chastised. ('What would you say about homework that was late?') Another teacher is reprimanded for not picking up trash in the corridor. ('Would you like to live like this at home?')

While some may find P S. 51 overly regimented, both students and teachers seem to thrive and prosper in the structured environment. One 10-year-old, who used to attend school in upper Manhattan, said that "teachers are less mean here." Another boy likes PS. 51 because the teachers at his old school "curse at the kids if you do stuff like spill milk."

And as Gwendolyn Moore, who asked to be transferred out of the school in 1976 and returned in 1983, said, "I love it here 'cause now you can teach."

This article, which appeared in the **West Side Spirit** *for Jan. 23, 1990, was sent to me by its author, Lydia Green.*

NEW FOLK SCHOOL STARTS IN MAINE

by Jonathan Falk

... PINE TREE FOLK SCHOOL is a new organization, founded by a group of Maine activists with many years experience working on economic empowerment, labor, peace, and women's issues. The idea of the school was born when several of us asked each other, 'Why can't we have something like Highlander in Maine?' Inspired by Highlander, we seek to work with Maine people struggling against oppression, supporting their efforts to take collective action to shape their own destiny.

We have also been inspired by several of the principles of Highlander's education—that the purpose of education is action, that action is the best foundation for education, and that education is more than just an intellectual activity, but should involve the whole person and many forms of expression.

We have decided to concentrate initially on several types of residential and non-residential popular education programs, offering them in whatever settings are convenient and comfortable for participants:

- programs in specific issue areas—e.g. economic education and health care.

- working with existing progressive organizations throughout Maine to meet specific organizational needs.
- supporting other Maine educators engaged in education for social change.

We view our first year of operation as an educational process of our own, as we learn more about how to carry out popular education in Maine, learn how to organize and sustain our activities, and build broader support for popular education. Pine Tree Folk School's administrative address is RR2, Box 7162, Carmel, ME 04419. Tel: (207) 848-2433.

Reprinted from FEAA NOTES & NEWS, the Newsletter of the Folk Education Association of America. The newsletter was sent on to me by Chris Spicer, president of the Association, who had also dropped in briefly on our 'Berkshire Live-out last summer! We were delighted to make his acquaintance, and hope the association continues, to

our mutual benefit. You will find a copy of a letter by Chris plus a copy of one sent to Ed Nagel in the Letters section, as well as the reply I sent back to him. Thanks, Chris!

See also the article on the life of the late Myles Horton, founder of Highlander School, on page 151, reprinted from the FEAA Journal, Option.

I include this material because of its informational content—but also because of a strong personal as well as theoretical interest in spreading the news about "what works" in alternative schools, and why—the (to me) hot issue of educational models, ideology, teaching methods, and the relationship of all these issues to "the lives of children." (thanks once again to George Dennison for the use of the term!) I'm not trying to say I know, but just to keep the issue of what is really good for children alive in the minds of educators and families of all varieties!

IN MEMORIAM
GRISCOM MORGAN, 1912-1993

Griscom Morgan died the evening of October 14,1993, in Yellow Springs, OH. He was 81 years old and had been in failing health for several years. Griscom was born April 30,1912, in Philadelphia, PA, the younger son of Arthur and Lucy Griscom Morgan. He came to Yellow Springs in 1921, soon after his father became President of Antioch College.

Griscom and his wife Jane were principal founders of the Vale Community, just south of Yellow Springs; the Morgans donated the land to the Community Service Land Trust to be held for the community.

He worked with his father Arthur Morgan in Community Service for two decades before he served as Director after his father's retirement in the late 1960's. During the fifties and sixties he was instrumental in widening the scope of Community Service's work to include intentional communities and land trusts.

Griscom was an early advocate of building a nursing care center in Yellow Springs, and he helped secure the sponsorship of the Friends Care Center by the Yellow Springs Friends Meeting, of which he was a founding member.

One of his ongoing concerns was for Antioch College, especially during the seventies when it appeared to be in disarray. He helped bring together from the College and Village Communities a 'Committee on the Future of Antioch.'

Griscom was also a prolific writer of letters-to-the-editor of the *Yellow Springs News*. Principal concerns he raised were: 1) the detrimental effect of population concentrations in cities, 2) the superiority of small schools; 3) reforming our currency so that it would promote non-inflationary full employment. His writings are available from Community Services (PO Box 243, Yellow Springs, OH 45387).

Contributions in Griscom's memory are welcome by the Friends Care Center in Yellow Springs and by Community Service. (Thanks to the *Community Service Newsletter* for this article)

And thanks from **ΣΚΟΛΕ** ***to the*** **FEAA newsletter** ***for this item from the*** **Community Service NL!**

From *THE JAPAN TIMES* :

IDEALISM SEEN AS CASUALTY AT FREE SCHOOL

by Cameron Hay

First year marked by firings, dissent, clash with traditional approach

Hashimoto, Wakayama Prefect:

In a society that offers few second chances for those who slip off the education conveyor belt, parents enrolling children in a new alternative school may feel they are sending them on a bungee jump.

Yet before Japan's first officially approved so-called elementary free school opened here last year, founder Shinichiro Hori had 90 children whose parents placed their faith in his philosophy of learning through doing.

In the first year of Kinokuni Children's Village, that faith has been severely tested.

Six members of staff have resigned or were fired and one attempted suicide on campus. Last month Hori, a professor at Osaka City University of Education, stepped down from his official position of headmaster. But he will continue to teach at Kinokuni.

Troubles at the school demonstrate just how entrenched the traditional approach to education is in Japan, and how difficult it will be to formulate a cohesive alternative.

Before opening Kinokuni, Hori convinced parents, and the local education board, that students could learn the standard curriculum while doing specially devised projects that would also cultivate their creativity and individuality.

However, as the first semester approached last year, a number of teachers, who had left existing schools to join Kinokuni, wanted to revert partly to traditional teaching methods for the core subjects of math and Japanese.

'You can't just rely on projects at a real school. There are some good things in traditional methods. For example, it makes sense to learn easy kanji first and work up to harder ones. We wanted the kids to learn them in this order,' said Akihiro Tsuji, a dormitory master who was fired last August.

Hori has declined comment on last year's problems, except to say there were differences of opinion.

But he refused to discuss curriculum and methods with other teachers, insisting on strictly applying 'free school' theory, according to Tsuji.

'Desks at Kinokuni aren't give kids freedom. When some teachers put them back in rows, Hori criticized them, 'Tsuji said, 'but the kids asked for the desks to be lined up because they said it was easier to concentrate. Now which is real freedom?'

Hori argued, however, that these students, who were in the fourth-year level, had already been influenced by time at traditional schools.

Teachers and parents who remain at Kinokuni say the school was built to apply free school teaching methods, not to be a watered-down appendage to the existing system.

These differences were exacerbated by disputes over pay and conditions. Last August, Tsuji and four teachers were sacked, allegedly for incompetence in Tsuji's case and grumpiness on the part of the teachers. According to Tsuji, the real reason was their opposition to Hori.

Soon afterward, Tsuji attempted suicide. He declined comment on the incident.

Students writing in the school newspaper expressed surprise over the decision, saying the teachers were friendly and popular and noting Hori had made a mistake, said Soichiro Ohata, 12, one of the editors.

'Living in the dorm was fun, but, to be honest, the teaching method wasn't that good. I'd like them to increase the kanji and maths lessons,' said Ohata, who now studies at home.

Ohata's father, Kichiro, said Kinokuni's main attraction was the social development it offered a child.

But Hori's imperious approach and refusal to discuss the sackings with parents had led the father to pull his son from the school. 'I lost faith in Hori as a person,' he said.

Over the year, 18 children left Kinokuni, though not all for reasons connected with problems with the school.

Ohata said his son's academic progress had not matched that of a child in a standard school, a point supported by the mother of a girl still at Kinokuni, who asked not to be identified.

'We can't expect to see results in just one year,' the mother said. 'Anyway, my reason for choosing Kinokuni was to allow my girl to become a well rounded, happy individual. And I believe this place can do that better than a traditional school.'

5th May, 1993.

To *The Japan Times*:

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to an article which appeared in the *Japan Times* of 4th May entitled 'Idealism seen as casualty at free school'. The piece, on Kinokuni Children's Village in Wakayama, presented a number of criticisms of the school. These were almost exclusively the complaints of just one ex-member of staff and very little of the positive side of Kinokuni was shown. This has, unfortunately, also been the case in similar reports by the media which have been eager to air the grievances of the disgruntled few. Perhaps understandably, Shinichiro Hori and other members of the current staff at Kinokuni have been reluctant to enter into a public slanging match with their detractors. However, as an interested outsider, I would like to mention one or two things which seem to have been neglected in the reporting of the first year of Kinokuni Children's Village.

I am a former member of the teaching staff at A. S. Neill's Summerhill School in England—the part model for Kinokuni—and am presently engaged in the study of alternative education as part of a Master's degree programme. One thing which is well-known in alternative educational circles around the world is that Shinichiro Hori has been a tireless worker and pioneer in the field of 'free education' for many years. As a translator of A.S. Neill's books and promoter of Neillian ideas his work has been so successful that Summerhill itself is now almost overrun with Japanese students, who form the largest foreign contingent at the school. His vision for a school such as Kinokuni has been long in the making and is a well-planned and thought out experiment, not just a rebellion against the rigid system in Japan.

Kinokuni is not simply a copy of Summerhill but bearing in mind the different needs of Japanese people and Hori's own philosophy on learning—is an attempt to integrate Neillian ideas on freedom and self-government with the project or learning-by-doing methods of John Dewey. It is especially interesting in that it aims to blend the ideas of two educationists who were concerned with quite different aspects of education; Neill with emotional freedom, Dewey with intellectual freedom. In creating an entirely new kind of school for Japan it is not surprising that there should be, at least, some teething troubles. For example, children who have been through more than two or three years of traditional state schooling almost inevitably find the change to a much freer system difficult to handle at first (as my own experience at Summerhill testifies) and all experimental schools need a considerable period of settling down time. However, in my own time spent visiting Kinokuni it has been quite apparent that the school has none of the serious problems faced at various times by Summerhill and others. Indeed the children I discovered there were generally happy, active and well-cared for. My visits to a number of Japanese schools in the state system have failed to convince me that they can compete with Kinokuni if anything like happiness, independence, and sincerity are the yardsticks for judgment.

The interviews I have conducted with some of the Kinokuni children as part of my studies have all revealed, contrary to the implication in the *Japan Times* article, that it is in fact the basic studies of maths and kanji that are the least popular activity for most children —project work being by far the most highly regarded. However, to get into arguments about lessons, academic standards, or even the positioning of chairs in the classroom is really missing the whole point. No one seems to have touched—except in passing—on the fact that it is the aim of Kinokuni to put the emotions at least on a level of equal importance with the intellect. (Indeed Neill went much further by stating categorically that the emotions should always come first). This is surely the reason for Kinokuni's existence. If parents are unduly concerned about their children's academic attainment then perhaps they have not yet understood that the purpose of the school is to provide a radical alternative not just a watered-down version of the state school. I am tempted to ask why did they send their children to Kinokuni in the first place? And grumpy ex-staff members would surely do better to leave the school alone to let it get on with its primary job of allowing children to be happy.

In my visits to Kinokuni I have been treated with courtesy by the current staff and have received nothing but help and assistance from them and from Shinichiro Hori himself. To hear him described as 'imperious' would be laughable if it were not so obviously wrong.

Neill, Montessori and other pioneers all experienced troubles because some people thought they were too radical at the time, because quick 'results' were expected, or because a few people just thought they could do the job better. It would be a great shame if Shinichiro Hori, Japan's most important pioneer, was to be hindered in the same way by misunderstanding adults. Kinokuni Children's Village is a brave experiment, not without its difficulties, but is now the first and only recognised alternative boarding school in Japan. It has begun to receive attention in educational circles throughout the world. Now that the Japanese have got this far along the path to a freer education it would be a disaster if they were to try and throw out the baby along with the bathwater.

John Potter

John Potter, whom I call John Potter 2 to distinguish him from "our" John Potter, head of the New School of Northern Virginia, is a former Summerhill teacher and is currently working on his M.A. in alternative education, as he tells us in his letter. His article on Homer Lane, Neill and Summerhill appeared in the winter issue of ΣΚΟΛΕ. We are hoping to have more written material from JP2, especially where it pertains to Japanese education, both traditional and alternative.

Shinichiro Hori & Kinokuni kids

And here's Chris Mercogliano's image of what happens at the Free School in Albany, New York:

CONCENTRATION

by Chris Mercogliano

Take three adults and twenty-three city, inner-city, and suburban kids of all shapes, sizes and colors to 250 mountaintop acres about twenty-five miles northeast of Albany, N.Y. Drill 9/16" diameter holes in the south sides of some healthy sugar maple trees. Tap in the spiles and hang lidded buckets from the hooks. Thank the trees. Gasp when you see the first droplets of sap spurt forth from a spile. Pray for the right cycling of freeze and thaw, freeze and thaw to keep the sap dripdripdripping into the pails. Empty them when they're full. Haul the heavy sap in five-gallon plastic buckets to the storage barrels near the evaporator and pour in the precious tree-blood. Repeat all but steps one, two and three as necessary. Oh, and remember to take a long guzzle of the ice-cold sweet crystalline liquid every time you empty the pails (to keep the doctor away.)

When the fifty-five gallon drums are nearly full, scour the forest for fallen branches or standing dead trees. Drag them over to the arch. Saw them into lengths with two-person bow saws (a chain saw will ruin everything). Learn how to work together and learn the difference between good wood and rotten wood which yields no heat when burned. Drag more branches over. Trip over the underbrush and scratch your face. Get your boot sucked off by the deep, wet snow. Delete a few expletives. Saw more wood... "I NEED MORE WOOD NOW! DO YOU WANT THE FIRE TO GO OUT? HURRY UP!!" ("But I'm cold, but I'm tired, but she/he's not doing anything, but I can't find my mittens, but... but...")

Take a break and start a snowball war. Play in the huge mud puddle next to the road. Salute the sun when it finally breaks free from the cold grey clouds (no New Age—or Old Age—adult inspired pseudo-rituals allowed, either; just a group of young children off by themselves spontaneously breaking into song when they suddenly find themselves wrapped in the sun's warm embrace). Eat large quantities of good food. Drink some more sweet sap.

Try to get a very big, very hot fire going with a lot of damp, soggy fuel. Discover that the dead lower branches of pine trees make fire medicine, and that birch bark is even better.

Learn how to strike a kitchen match without burning yourself. Once the fire's really going, pour ten gallons of the sugar maple sap into a two foot by three foot pan (the evaporator) which rests a bit precariously over the fire on two rows of cinderblocks (the arch). Endlessly debate whether a watched pot ever boils. Come back and sit by the fire and feed it twigs whenever you get too cold (the fire remains at the center of the dance throughout). Watch the patterns in the billowing steam and get smoke in your eyes. Stick a stick into the murky, bubbling mess and then taste it. Ask if it's syrup yet a few dozen times throughout the day and night. Discover that it does indeed take forty gallons of sap to make just one gallon of syrup.

Watch the sun set and the first star appear. Let the darkness gradually creep up to you. When it starts to turn cold again, try to remember where you left your coat and hat. If your feet are wet, go inside and put on dry socks, and if your boots are wet on the inside put plastic bags on your feet before you put your boots back on. Come back outside and discover that dry cattail heads make excellent torches if you have enough imagination. Watch the swarm of excited fireflies darting around the fire in the winter/spring moonlight. Oh yes, and don't forget the moon — get out a good telescope and study her up real close for the first time. And search for Jupiter or Saturn, too. Wonder about the stars and the planets and the universe. Ask all the questions, even the why ones that have no answers. Wonder some more.

Get very tired — the good kind of tired. ("It's still not syrup yet?") Go back inside the old lodge and make up a warm bed as near to the woodstove as you can. If you find that you're missing your mommy or your daddy, notice how that feels in your body, and where. (Is there anyone in the room who can give you the right kind of comfort when you're this vulnerable?) Let someone read you a really good Grimm's fairy tale before you fall into a deep, dreamful sleep.

Wake up in the morning and finish off enough syrup for a victory pancake breakfast on the kitchen stove. Celebrate! WE DID IT!! That thickened, amber concentrate is its own sweet reward for a long hard day's work and play, with its measure of physical or psychic discomfort. Have another pancake or just keep sticking your finger in the syrup pot and licking it until your teeth begin to ring. Celebrate some more!

* * *

And so ends only a sketchy recipe for education—Free School style. The maple syrup metaphor is a useful one, and I will expand on it later with some stories from our recent adventure at Rainbow Camp, as we call it. But first I want to play with the notion of concentrate, or concentration, which I tentatively chose as the title of this article. I'm not thinking, here, about an intense mental act or the old TV quiz show where you had to remember the location of the other half of the match in order to win the prize. I am thinking about the process of getting to the essence of something, or of getting the most out of whatever you have to work with, to put it another way. It seems to me that there is an ever-increasing gap in our modern world between one's experience and its meaning. This is certainly not a new idea, and I'm not setting out to write about theology; but as the world's children today face an ever increasing level of distraction—increasing in both number and in intensity (to the point of so-called 'virtual reality'), I fear that their ability to distinguish between what's important and what's unimportant is ever diminishing. In my mind, this brings us out of the domains of theology or philosophy and into that of education, purely defined, as a process whereby one discovers how to burn off or skim off the dross in order to get to the precious metal underneath; or, to return to my original metaphor, how to boil down one's experience until what's left in one's pockets is essential and meaningful. I was immediately attracted to the label of Essential Schools, but never having visited one, have remained suspicious that it's actually a lot of clever packaging; which, on an institutional level, is so often what happens to good ideas in our society.

This issue of labeling and packaging is particularly fresh for me because for the past several years Albany has been in the process of 'magnetizing' its schools, as many other cities have been doing, to avoid forced busing of kids to achieve racial integration.

Just this year, a 'Montessori Magnet' was opened four blocks from the Free School. Several million dollars was spent to retrofit this school for about 250 kids, and the other night they had an open house. The next morning, the mother of one of my pre-schoolers, who had attended the open house, came up to me all wide-eyed and said something like, 'It was so beautiful and everything was so new and they had so much wonderful equipment. Can't you... can't we?...' Now, I have nothing against Maria Montessori (and I love magnets!); I'm all for kids having access to beautiful things and new equipment; and like John

Gatto, I certainly advocate the proliferation of alternatives of every possible kind.

But, I can't seem to dodge the question of what message are we giving ourselves when we expend such huge quantities of material resources for the purpose of schooling young children? Isn't it that basic education is somehow a complex, technological — and expensive — problem? And how much money is being squandered for the dual purposes of public relations and image management? I hope I don't sound jealous or like some well-preserved Luddite; it's just that I'm beginning to understand better why we sometimes have to work so hard at reassuring our Free School parents that our school is indeed a place where their children will learn exactly what they need to be learning at their particular stage of development. But alas, I'm afraid that this, too, is properly the subject of another article.

Our 125 year-old building in Albany is filled with second-hand everything, and more than one friend of ours with regional or even national notoriety has complained to us about our keeping too low a profile. And we don't have any slick labels for our frequent two to five day forays out to our third-hand Rainbow Camp. (We purchased the camp, which is on a small lake, for a very good price because it needed a lot of work; and then, a year later, we were given 250 wooded acres just two miles away. Isn't it amazing how these things happen?) They're not "field trips," or "core curriculum experiences," or anything else that you might invent. We simply load up our fourth-hand Dodge stretch van (originally a state prison van... how's that for irony?) with teachers, kids, and gear and head out of the city, stopping at the grocery store on the way. I guess you could call it instant residential education (IRD)...

Our time at the camp is an integral part of our school program, where I have witnessed personal revolutions occurring in countless children over the years. By now I am quite certain that the secret ingredient is the fact that all of us, adults included, suddenly find ourselves displaced from our familiar (root word family) patterns. There are very few props, either. We heat with wood, and there is no running water in the winter-time. All quickly learn the basic law of water conservation: *If it's yellow let it mellow, if it's brown flush it down.* Water for flushing comes from one of the brooks that feeds the lake, just a short haul away. It's very much like rural farm life. We live like a sprawling extended family, with even the youngest sharing the cooking, cleaning, and firewood and water gathering chores, and the oldest oftentimes reading bedtime stories to the younger kids. It can be a lot of hard work, especially during sugaring season.

There's really no formula for what we're doing because life at the camp is governed by the needs of the moment. Two concepts coined by radical psychotherapist Wilhelm Reich way back in the 1930's and 1940's at least partially describe what we're up to: 'self-regulation' and 'work democracy.' Much of Reich's thinking and practice were aimed at *preventing* mental illness, which he broadly termed character neurosis. His life goal was to create a model of healthy human functioning, as opposed to some systematized analysis of disease states, as is the norm to this day. Having decided on an in-depth look at child development, Reich took his concern with child rearing practices and education to a lecture by A.S. Neill. The subsequent meeting of the two led to a life-long friendship, self-regulation being the cornerstone of Neill's approach at Summerhill. The idea is that if kids can learn at a very early age how to manage their own rhythms, how to make responsible choices (by learning from the consequences of their mistakes), and how to meet their own needs, then they will grow up into autonomous adults capable of authoring satisfying and meaningful lives. Reich was absolutely delighted to discover a school that actually lived by this principle.

A bone that I have to pick with Neill on this subject has to do with his attitude towards work. In *Summerhill: A Radical Approach To Child Rearing*, Neill wrote that if you ever saw a child working, then you were looking at a kid who had in some way been brainwashed by an adult. According to old Neill, work is a four-letter word for healthy, free children. Not that I entirely disagree with him, but my twenty-one years of experience at The Free School have taught me something a little different. Neill was a rebel at heart, and Summerhill has always been populated largely by rebellious middle and upper-middle class children; and I think that these factors may have colored his conclusions on this score. On many, many occasions over the years, I have observed kids working, both by choice and with great gusto and pleasure. Several factors are necessary to make this so: The work has to have inherent meaning to the kids *on their level.*. Also, they have to be continually free to change the way and the pace at which they go about the job, whatever it may be. Free children certainly hate just about anything when it becomes routine. Sometimes, I have to bite my tongue when I'm tempted to suggest a better, faster, more efficient way to get the job done; and if I do intrude, invariably their enthusiasm disperses as fast as the air out of an untied balloon. Finally, the fruits of their labors need to follow directly from the completion of the task. It's evident how the maple sugaring fits in here: The kids will each take home a small jar of syrup to share with their families, and then will help marketing the rest to raise cash towards the taxes on the new land (kids love making money, even when the money goes to the school and not directly into their own coffers).

Reich coined the term 'work democracy' early in his career after attempting to effect mass social change in Europe through the political systems of several different countries. He eventually became disillusioned, concluding that power politics under any banner, no matter how enlightened or 'socially democratic,' always stands in the way of real solutions to social problems. Work democracy, on the other hand, is the notion that when groups of people organize themselves around common tasks and goals, then natural forms of authority and decision-making which support mutual accomplishment can emerge. Modes of being and of action remain fluid and changeable. This is because they are non-ideological, which is a critical factor since even the best of ideas turns toxic when it is practiced in a rigid, fundamentalistic fashion. In a true work democracy, cooperation rather than competition becomes a core value. I would argue here that M. Scott Peck's more recent model of community is essentially a reworked version of Reich's original concept. (Reich's body of work later became a foundation stone of the new school of the psychology of groups and group dynamics that emerged in the fifties and early sixties, which was Peck's area of early training.)

At Rainbow Camp, life is not always 'democratic.' Often the situation demands of kids and grown-ups alike that they do something that they would just as soon not do right then. Sometimes I just put kids to work; we don't have a meeting; we don't take a vote; I just say, 'Please do it.' On his first Rainbow Camp expedition, when eleven-year-old Rakeem *(not his real name)*, a recent inner-city parochial school cast-off, helplessly decided that he couldn't stuff his borrowed sleeping bag into its generously large sack, I very undemocratically decided to intervene. Rakeem's strategy was to try to force the unstuffed bag back on the much smaller boy that he had borrowed it from.

That boy could have, and in fact probably would have, called a democratic 'council meeting,' which is our school's preferred tool for conflict resolution, policy making and changing, etc. I happened to have an instinct that this was just the moment for me to put Rakeem, who has a smothering mother and no father, in a bind instead. I simply told him that neither he nor anybody else would get their breakfast until they had all their gear packed up and in order; and even though the bag was borrowed, it was certainly his to deal with. Predictably, Rakeem, who is overweight and a very angry man-child, stomped off upstairs to curse and sulk.

Breakfast time drew near, and as there was still no sign of our boy, I announced to all the other kids that I was ready to bet cash that Rakeem was about to miss a meal. Immediately Isaac, another cast-off from the same parochial school, held out his hand and said, 'Dollar bet!' We shook on it and then went about our business. About five minutes went by and there was still no sign of our boy, so I told Isaac that he'd better get his money together because breakfast was just about ready. Instantly, several other older kids went dashing off to find Rakeem to tell him what was going on downstairs. Rakeem appeared within a minute, stuffed the bag and returned it to its owner within another, and a few seconds after that, Isaac had his crisp new dollar, much to everyone's delight!

Interestingly, it was Isaac who had called a council meeting on Rakeem just the night before because Rakeem had bullied him out of one of the camp's cozy armchairs by the woodstove. At that meeting, Isaac got a motion passed that Rakeem, who only sullenly stonewalled when asked by the other kids what was up, would have to sit in the very chair he had taken from Isaac (all night, if necessary) until he was willing to call another meeting to work out the problem. (He eventually did.) So, as I paid off my lost bet, I made sure to point out to Rakeem what a true friend he had in Isaac — on two counts now — one for caring enough to stop him when he was being a bully, and two for believing in his ability to get off it and take care of himself. All of us value friendship very highly at the Free School, and many life-long friendships are forged here.

I tell this story for several reasons. First, though he isn't around any more to check with, I think Reich would cite this an example of work democracy in action. It's important that we all learn to practice self-sufficiency at Rainbow Camp, and that we all pull together as well. I think that this was a most appropriate time for me to exercise my natural authority as an adult and as a parent figure with a kid who gets far too little effective parenting at home. Next there's the fact that at the Free School we try not to adhere rigidly to any ideological precepts, democracy or otherwise. We certain give democratic decision making its due; but above all, we just try to do what works. Every child is different, every situation is different, and we simply don't find that 'democracy' is always the answer.

Finally, to return to the maple syrup metaphor, we believe that the process of change always requires some heat. In the case of Rakeem's mini-breakthrough, Isaac and the other kids provided plenty of heat at the council meeting and then I started a little one-on-one fire with him the next morning. Rakeem returned home later that day not quite the same child. While we were driving back to Albany, I asked him whether he wanted to come back out to the camp again. His face lit up with a smile in response and he said, 'Yeah; only I wish that we didn't have to work so hard!' Life at Rainbow Camp as well as at our day-school in the city involves fairly frequent conflict which then gets handled, sometimes unpredictably, and always in a myriad number of ways, some of which are 'democratic' and some not. The school motto that I coined many years ago is, 'Never a dull moment, always a dull roar!'

Several stories remain to be told that further depict the education that takes place at Rainbow Camp... It was Alexandra, a nine-year old who set fire to her bedroom three years ago, that turned up as one of my frequent helpers while I tended the fire in the arch. I remembered that for some time after that near disaster she was absolutely terrified of fire; understandably so. At one point, when the two of us were alone, I found just the right opening for talking through her fire setting experience with her. Her memory of the event was dimming and it seemed to me that some denial was creeping in; and so I think it was important for her to go gently back over that traumatic past event and explore its teachings. It was a very relaxed talk, and all the while she was steadily pushing back the edge of her fear of fire by tending and feeding the one that was boiling off our syrup and warming us against the chilly evening. It seems unlikely to me that that 'lesson' would have arisen out of any planned discussion about the dangers of fire, or even by chance back at school in Albany. And no expensive props were needed (there I go again).

Then there is Anton, a six-year-old boy who a year ago was taken away from and then returned to his mother by the Department of Social Services; thanks, in part, to our intervention on their behalf. He was the last one to go in one night while I was pushing to finish boiling off a batch of sap. Anton quietly sat for hours just poking the fire with one stick after another while I sat talking about everything under the moon with Mark, a recent college graduate who has been volunteering three days a week in the school, and who had decided to come out to the camp and really get his feet wet. What was Anton, fatherless like Rakeem, learning while he sat there listening to our impromptu rap session? There simply were two men talking, talking by turns intently and then laughing in low tones—nothing more—and yet there was nowhere else that Anton wanted to be at that time.

Joseph Chilton Pearce says that all children actually learn via a basic modeling process, as opposed to all the other pseudo-scientific and technical, jargon-laden constructs that humans have come up with to describe how learning takes place. I would hazard a guess that Mark and I were showing Anton, among other things, how two men go about getting to know each other a little more intimately.

At the Free School, we place much emphasis on all forms of relationships. The late George Dennison, author of the classic, *The Lives of Children*, which is about his experiences in a wonderful, but short-lived, school on the Lower East Side of New York back in the late sixties, wrote the most eloquent descriptions of the primacy of human relationships in the 'educational process' that I have ever seen in print. In the book, George told story after beautiful story to reinforce his belief that all true learning takes place within relationships. Period. So, Free School adults and children alike spend a good deal of time working on and working out relationships, and the ensuing learning is literally the heart of our 'curriculum.'

When Mark, the aforementioned volunteer, showed up two months ago with absolutely no teaching experience whatsoever, we told him that the water was warm and to go right ahead and jump in if that was what he wanted. He chose to do just that, and he has been nothing but a great blessing to us ever since. Mark is both open-hearted and open-minded, and he is entirely and refreshingly available to 'relate' on a variety of levels. The kids both love and respect him. Any day now, I guess I should make up an official-looking badge with the word 'TEACHER' printed on it and pin it on his shirt!

The last story to tell here has to do with a story that I decided to read as a bedtime one to the kids one night at the camp when I wasn't running the evaporator until all hours. It was Grimm's, 'The Water of Life,' a powerful tale about a young prince, the youngest of three sons, whose father was slowly wasting away from some mysterious ailment. As the three young men were walking about grieving one day, an old man met them and told them where the cure for their father, the king, could be found. Known as The Water of Life, it could only be attained after a long journey. The oldest son first won permission to go in search of the cure; and soon after setting out, came across a dwarf waiting beside the road.

When the dwarf asked where he was headed, the prince only sneered at the dwarf, and so the insulted and enraged dwarf placed a very effective curse on him. Ditto the second son, and when he failed to return, the youngest prince begged his dying and reluctant father for permission to go. When he encountered the very same dwarf, unlike his older brothers, he stopped, told the dwarf the whole story, and asked for his help. The dwarf responded by telling the young prince to travel to a certain enchanted castle where the Water of Life could be found, and then giving him exactly the tools he would need to survive the trials to come. Once there, the prince met a beautiful princess who promised him the kingdom if he would free her from a spell she was under and come back in a year to marry her. Then, she told him where to find the well containing the Water, and he filled a cup with it and headed home.

Passing the dwarf along the way, the prince stopped to thank him and to ask if he happened to know where his two brothers were. The dwarf told him about the curse; the prince begged for and received their release; but not before the dwarf warned the young man about his older brothers' bad hearts. Soon enough, the brothers did betray him, each to the point of going after the spellbound princess, who, anxious for the return of her prince, had ordered a road leading to the palace to be built of shining gold. Next, she had instructed her courtiers to admit only the man who rode straight up the middle of the road to her gate, as that would be her true lover.

When the oldest brother saw the golden road, he stopped to admire it and decided that it would be a shame to ride upon it; so he rode to the right of it instead, and was turned away by the castle guards. Ditto the second brother who decided to ride to the left and was also turned away. Meanwhile, the young prince, having now survived a whole year in bitter exile, decided to seek out the princess and was so intent on joining with her beauty that he never even saw the golden road! Therefore, he rode right down the middle, married the princess, and was even reunited with his father who had eventually learned of his older sons' deceit.

This story is a deep one containing many interior meanings, as do all the juicy fairy tales I read or tell to kids whenever I get the chance (Rainbow Camp is ideal for this). For me, 'The Water of Life' beautifully brings home the themes of this article—and in a properly mythical fashion: The young prince, despite great hardships and betrayals (and also because of them), is *concentrated*.. The heat generated by his troubles and his great yearnings are a very necessary element in his growth. In the end, he is so focused on his love and undistracted by unimportant material details that he reaches his goal—not without help, of course — which he receives because he is open to relationship and is willing to ask.

At the Free School, we believe that the task contains its own reward, and our kids practice open-heartedness, persistence and resourcefulness every day because they are truly responsible for themselves and for each other. We also try never to ignore the mythological dimension of life and of learning. Properly lived, life can be an infinitely magical series of events, if one still believes, and the essential need not be lost sight of. Certainly, nothing is more magical in the everyday world than the process of slowly transforming the water of life of the sugar maple tree into thick, sweet amber liquid-gold.

Chris Mercogliano has been a teacher and in recent years, co-director of the Free School in Albany for lo! these many years, and is a frequent and valued contributor to ΣΚΟΛΕ.

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CHILDREN OF THE HOLOCAUST:

For me, the ultimate criterion we need to bear in mind as a standard of what human indifference to human needs can lead to under ever-worsening economic and social conditions—in this case, the national indignity of Germany's having lost a war and blamed for the cultural wreckage caused by that war, plus a dogmatically mechanical approach to problem-solving—in other words, being "rational," being proud, being "right!"; having a "case" and being unjustly persecuted; plus the culturally built-in scapegoat mechanism of anti-Semitism as an acceptable answer to these unsolved problems.

It would be convenient to believe that this horror could only happen in Germany or some place other than our own! But remember Goethe, Heine, Beethoven, Einstein, Schweitzer! They too were products of the Germanic cultural soul! As Sinclair Lewis saw, it can happen here! Elie Wiesel calls us all "children of the Holocaust." Can we learn the lesson in time? I highly recommend Primo Levi's writings!

From *Survival in Auschwitz*

by Primo Levi

You who live safe
In your warm houses,
You who find, returning in the evening,
Hot food and friendly faces:
Consider if this is a man
Who works in the mud
Who does not know peace
Who fights for a scrap of bread
Who dies because of a yes or a no.
Consider if this is a woman,
Without hair and without name
With no more strength to remember,
Her eyes empty and her womb cold
Like a frog in winter.
Meditate that this came about:
I commend these words to you.
Carve them in your hearts

At home, in the street,
Going to bed, rising;
Repeat them to your children,
Or may your house fall apart,
May illness impede you,
May your children turn their faces from you.

THE AWAKENING

I reached Turin on 19 October, after thirty-five days of travel; my house was still standing, all my family was alive, no one was expecting me. I was swollen, bearded and in rags, and had difficulty in making myself recognized. I found my friends full of life, the warmth of secure meals, the solidity of daily work, the liberating joy of recounting my story. I found a large clean bed, which in the evening (a moment of terror) yielded softly under my weight. But only after many months did I lose the habit of walking with my glance fixed to the ground, as if searching for something to eat or to pocket hastily or to sell for bread; and a dream full of horror has still not ceased to visit me, at sometimes frequent, sometimes longer, intervals.

It is a dream within a dream, varied in detail, one in substance. I am sitting at a table with my family, or with friends, or at work, or in the green countryside; in short, in a peaceful relaxed environment, apparently without tension or affliction; yet I feel a deep and subtle anguish, the definite sensation of an impending threat. And in fact, as the dream proceeds, slowly or brutally, each time in a different way, everything collapses and disintegrates around me, the scenery, the walls, the people, while the anguish becomes more intense and more precise. Now everything has changed to chaos; I am alone in the centre of a grey and turbid nothing, and now, I *know* what this thing means, and I also know that I have always known it; I am in the Lager once more, and nothing is true outside the Lager. All the rest was a brief pause, a deception of the senses, a dream; my family, nature in flower, my home. Now this inner dream, this dream of peace, is over, and in the outer dream, which continues, gelid, a well-known voice resounds: a single word, not imperious, but brief and subdued. It is the dawn command of Auschwitz, a foreign word, feared and expected: get up, 'Wstawàch'.

Turin, December 1961-November 1962.

from *The Reawakening*

by Primo Levi

Dreams used to come in the brutal nights,
Dreams crowding and violent
Dreamt with body and soul,
Of going home, of eating, of telling our story.
Until, quickly and quietly, came
The dawn reveille:
Wstawàch.
And the heart cracked in the breast.

Now we have found our home again,
Our hunger is quenched,
All the stories have been told.
It is time.
Soon we shall hear again
The alien command:
Wstawàch.

11 January, 1946.

Available from Collier Books, Macmillan Publishing Co., 866 3rd Ave., New York, NY 10022. $8.00 each. Two of Primo Levi's books, **Survival in Auschwitz** ***and a companion volume,*** **The Reawakening,** ***from which these selections were taken, are his appallingly vivid, day-to-day account of his experiences in Auschwitz and his post-war Odyssey toward his home in Turin, Italy.***

It is my belief that Levi's writings should be offered to high school children in every land in the same way **The Diary of Anne Frank** ***has been adopted as universal reading material, so that at long last we might begin to understand—and to pass on that understanding—of the ways in which we create and perpetuate the phenomenon of man as monstrous destroyer of life!***

As a saddening footnote, I have heard only recently that Primo Levi took his own life in 1987 after many apparently peaceful and productive years in Turin with his family and his work as manager of a chemical factory, which he loved, but from which he had retired in 1977 to write full-time! I

don't know why and how this death came about, but I find it very disturbing, having grown to love and respect him deeply for the quality of his life and of his humanness.

UNIVERSAL ACCLAIM FOR PRIMO LEVI

'His eminence has arrived as an ever wider public discovers his integrity, his dignity, his humanity, and his exacting standards.'

—H. Stuart Hughes, *The New York Times Book Review*

'He is our Dante. His trilogy *(Survival in Auschwitz, The Reawakening,* and *Moments of Reprieve)* is a modern masterpiece.'

—Hugh Nissenson, *USA Today*

'One of Europe's most humane and least dispensable writers.'

—Richard Eder, *Los Angeles Times*

'How should young people be taught about the Holocaust? Give them Primo Levi.'

—*The Wall Street Journal*

'A triumph over the experience of Auschwitz and over our reluctance to read what might give us pain. Levi has given us the sense of what it was to survive, not as victims, but 'as men made to follow after excellence and knowledge.' Failure to read such a work is to consign a river of human experience to oblivion.'

—*Chicago Tribune*

'Primo Levi is that rare individual, a survivor who can write about his experiences yet keep a sense of balance and proportion . . . and by listening to him, so will we all learn.'

—*San Francisco Chronicle*

A MAP, A MIRROR, AND A WRISTWATCH

by John Taylor Gatto
Former New York State Teacher of the Year
and Three-Time New York City Teacher of the Year

Let me edge into this presentation by telling you something about the children I teach and about some of the changes I saw in the general character development of these kids in the 30 years I spent inside public school classrooms. By a series of accidents, certainly not through my own design, I came to spend about a third of my time with confident white children from prosperous families, about a third of my time with a very mixed group of kids who represented 'problem children' of a fairly mild and manageable sort, and a third of my time with black, Puerto Rican, and Dominican children from Harlem and Spanish Harlem; so when I tell you in advance that the observations I'm going to make apply to all of these groups I have earned my opinion in long and arduous action as a front-line practitioner in the school wars our press coverage dimly reflects.

Who are the children I taught? If you spent a short time with them under carefully controlled conditions, as perhaps a visiting businessman or politician might, you would see children who seemed to meet traditional specifications of the genus: alert, intelligent, active, funny, emotional beings who through judicious application of adult attention and some occasional resort to tricks and tricky machines can be brought to listen, to question, to analyze, to record, and to respond in a heartening fashion.

It would be an error, however, to fashion a long-range teaching strategy of these quick impressions—yes, my kids look and act as kids have always done, but all of my children are marked deeply by their experience in a secret underworld of the industrial society in decay—the government compulsion school. Schools, too, look as they did prior to 1960, but they are not the same at all. For a whole host of complicated reasons schools have been converted into behavioral training laboratories, where intellectual development—the enlightened historical justification for *schooling* children at all—has been abandoned in favor of other forms of training. So in an era of great technical progress my students have been invisibly disfigured by historical placement in a time without moral logic; in a time without an ethical source in God, in natural law, or in other forms of traditional authority, this destines many of them, rich and poor, for meaningless lives of unrooted activity. Only the State, jealous of its final claim to total loyalty, speaks regularly through its rules and laws about proper behavior, and because the voice of the State is, by turns, too rigid, or too pragmatic (conditional/situational ethics), or too dishonest (playing favorites/promising what it cannot deliver), children listen less and less. Nor should they do any differently; their disobedience is an inborn defense: they are trying to save their sanity or their souls, though few would have the language to put it that way.

The children I teach are victims of a very specific human delusion, one which once affected only kings and priests, though now it infects big bureaucrats, public and private, and schoolteachers alike. I refer to the fantastic notion that something called 'mass man' actually exists, that human intellectual talent is for the is for the most part a function of economics and social class, and that these conditions can be scientifically managed by a huge, intricately articulated bureaucracy which itself is cantilevered with other huge bureaucracies. This is the ultimate statement of scientific materialism on human life since in this view human nature is the result of random environmental factors; if the randomness is removed a good result will be almost automatic. Thus, it is thought, the training of the young, the corporate world of economics, the political world of power, breeding, death, war, amusement, health, and other basic aspects of individual and social life should be centrally controlled and regulated because all men and women are the same at the core, need the same things, and are as malleable as plastic.

This peculiar illusion that people are a mass, based on fear, greed, the need to have security, the need to justify special privileges, and other dark sources in the human psyche, leads inevitably to a form of social organization which bleeds significance from individual lives by removing decisions of consequence from the individual. Without personal significance people go insane, many become outlaws. This is the world of modem bureaucratic society which can only exist in a stable form through the relentless, nearly comprehensive social and psychological training provided by mass schooling. It is easy to pierce the veil of fiction that schooling has anything much to do with reading, writing, or arithmetic. The frightening fact that particular myth is still perpetuated is ample testimony to how unwilling we have been to face a horrifying truth. Schools work exactly as they were designed to work; they produce incomplete and tractable human beings, exactly as they were designed to do. To a scientific morality such a scheme has much to recommend it. It makes management of mass-man seem necessary – and real.

Scientific management is an idea older than Plato. Its theory is found in cabalistic lore attributed to Solomon and in records of pyramid builders before him; but in 20th century schooling the thing derives from certain schemes of the American efficiency engineer, Frederick Taylor, who at the beginning of the present century was the driving force behind the imposition of mechanical ideals on every conceivable plane of human affairs including sexual love (think of sex manuals with their diagrams and recommended sequences), ways in which human energy could be regulated and utilized according to standards of machine productivity. Behind Taylor, of course, were the dreams of cosmic social engineers, intimations that a long-awaited planetary society was at hand, and that because of the troubling defects of 'mass man' it could only be run as a beehive world, or a hospital planet, or a prison state. Such had John Calvin's dark outlook on human nature which had once provided the spine of New England life transformed itself in the public and private plans of those groups which thought of themselves as 'progressive'. Hell was no longer the destination of most of us after death, Life and Death themselves were only epiphenomena, organizing and regulating society and nature were the only remaining things of meaning in a machine world. Reforming the past.

We won't have time here for a clinic in philosophy, but I'll ask you to examine the implications of some of this. If human beings are cleverly disguised mechanisms then where can the notion of 'liberty' apply? Liberty and the theological notion of free will are joined irrevocably in a close relationship. You can say, 'I don't have time for this lofty stuff,' but your own actions will make a liar out of you.

People are free, or they are bound, determined by forces out of their own control. The society you allow stems from the decision which. So I want you to think of this: if people are not mechanisms (let's say that for the sake of argument) then what is the net effect of treating them so? Adam Smith doesn't talk about this in Wealth of Nations but he does have something to say about it in The Theory of Moral Sentiments. If you treat people like machines the moral effect on them and yourself is lousy.

Or think of this: how can you 'educate' a machine at all? Even in a loose usage of that verb, a machine is only improved from outside the mechanism or circuitry. But in a human sense people have a very limited ability to be improved by the attention of others from the outside; most of the job, according to every major thinker who ever turned attention to this, has to be privately accomplished in the private interior of each individual consciousness. You can't teach courage or perseverance, wisdom or piety. Such things can be learned, it's clear, but taught, no. Yet people only begin to be educated when they tackle such goals -- indeed, they are hardly completely human until that moment.

Individual development has to be fought for privately in a free market of plentiful choices, no one can do it for you. Too much interference early on cripples our natural progress toward independence and produces its opposite, dependence. We all recognize the bad effect a too indulgent parent has, we should begin to see the same force at work in a too indulgent school. This formula has been clearly understood by the powerful of this planet for thousands of years; even a cursory inspection of the development of their own young shows plenty of early exposure to unmonitored experience, risk-taking, independence, high performance standards, and many other characteristics which receive only lip service in government schooling, even suburban government schooling. Elite education, where the kid does hard work and does it without interference, is one likely cause for the amazing continuity of certain families throughout history. Yet elite education can be provided at less cost than factory school training. Some irony there. Until roughly the same time of the Jackson presidency in the 19th century rich and poor alike could get this same sort of education in a variety of different ways, but from Horace Mann's time until today those possibilities have been deliberately—I feel tempted to say 'scientifically'—closed down for all but the economic elites and a few very determined parents from all the other classes. Why has that happened do you suppose?

In spite of a long-standing knowledge how human education is done right, the model Frederick Taylor, high priest of scientific management, sought to impose was a machine model, a model whose results are highly predictable, one which eliminates risks by setting its sights very low. Although in a limited sense this procedure successfully increases material output when the target is cheap, standardized, mass-produced merchandise, it only manages this productivity by crippling the self-governing spirit. So there's a big price to pay. Whether you decide to pay it or not depends a lot upon your regard for your fellow human beings; perhaps it depends on your idea of God, who knows?

2.

A few years back one of the schools at Harvard issued some advice to its students on planning a career in the new international economy it believed was arriving. It warned sharply that academic classes and professional credentials would be devalued when measured against real world training. Ten qualities were offered as essential to successfully adapt to what Harvard believed was a rapidly changing world of work.

See how many of these you think are regularly taught in the schools of your city, including its 'gifted and talented' classes:

1) The ability to define problems without a guide.
2) The ability to ask hard questions which challenge prevailing assumptions.
3) The ability to work in teams without guidance.
4) The ability to work absolutely alone.
5) The ability to persuade others that your course is the right course.
6) The ability to debate issues and techniques in public.
7) The ability to reorganize information into new patterns.
8) The ability to discard irrelevant data and find what you need from the masses of information.
9) The ability to think dialectically.
10) The ability to think inductively, deductively, and heuristically.

You might be able to come up with a better list than Harvard did without surrendering any of these fundamental ideas, and yet from where I sit—and I sat around schools for nearly 30 years—I know we don't teach any of these things as a matter of school policy. And for good reason, schools as we know them couldn't function at all if we did. Try to imagine a school where children challenged prevailing assumptions or worked alone without guidance. How about a school where children defined their own problems? If you want your kid to learn what Harvard says is necessary you'll have to arrange it outside school time in between the dentist and MTV. If you are poor you'd better forget it altogether. None of the schools I ever worked for were able to provide any important parts of this vital curriculum for children.

All the schools I worked for taught nonsense up front and under the table they taught young people how to be dumb, how to be slavish, how to be frightened, and how to be dependent.

Things weren't always this way in the United States, indeed for the first 250 years of our history schooling here was wildly entrepreneurial; before we had forced schooling on the government model we had abundant schooling of many different types and the result by any historical measure were quite spectacular. Tom Paine's Common Sense, the philosophical basis for the American Revolution, sold 600,000 copies to a population of two and a half million colonists (about 75 percent of them African slaves or indentured servants!), James Fenimore Cooper's novels, rich with periodic sentences and dense with allusions, sold five million copies in the first two decades of the 19th century in a population of about eighteen million; Scott's novels matched that sale as did Noah Webster's monumental Speller. All this happened long before compulsion schooling was more than a gleam in the eye of certain interested parties in the early Federal period.

Pierre duPont de Nemours, who had a monopoly on gunpowder sales for the War of 1812 said in a book he wrote in that year, National Education in the United States, that 'less than four in every thousand cannot read and do numbers' with great facility, and the habit of Bible reading at the breakfast table had led to such skill in argumentation among the young that he predicted the new nation would soon hold a comer on the world's supply of lawyers. Tocqueville's classic Democracy in America, whose first volume appeared in 1835, confirmed duPont's conclusions, and a book written a few years later by another French aristocrat, Michael Chevalier, said in astonishment that the American farmer had such a mind that he entered the fields in the morning with the plow in one hand and Descartes in the other!

Literacy in language and number was, from the beginning, highly valued in the New World, far beyond practical need. It was as if the promise that each mind could soar to unprecedented achievement beyond the limit of class-bound European practice inspired the commonality to take what its natural gifts offered. In this new scheme schooling was everywhere considered important, but nowhere was it considered very important. The principle that the educated man, like Benjamin Franklin, is largely self-taught was the real dynamic honored, and though the decision to proceed in this fashion was probably an accident of time and place in the last New World on the planet rather than any determination of scientific pedagogy, by some unlucky happenstance it is exactly the brilliant spring of development twentieth century institutional schooling has broken.

Lesson XXVII, 'The Self-Taught Mathematician', used at one-room schools in the northeast in the year 1833 (20 years before the first compulsion school law) for children who would today be fourth to sixth graders is a revealing window into the attitudes toward learning present fifty years after we became a nation. It is the story of Edmund Stone, a self-educated Scottish mathematician born at the beginning of the 18th century. His father was gardener to the Duke of Argyle. One day when the Duke was walking in his garden he observed a Latin copy of Newton's Principia lying on the grass and thinking it had been brought from his own library sought to carry it back to its place. Stone, a boy of 18, rushed forward to claim the book for his own.

'Yours?' said the Duke. 'Do you then understand Geometry, Latin, and Newton?'

'I know a little of them,' replied the young man.

The Duke, surprised, entered into a conversation with the young man who had not the slightest acquaintance with schooling and was astonished at the force, the accuracy, and the candor of his answers.

'But how,' said the Duke, 'came you by the knowledge of these things?'

Stone replied, 'A servant taught me to read when I was eight. Does one need to know anything more than the twenty-six letters in order to learn everything else that one wishes?'

'I first learned to read. The masons were then at work upon your house. I approached them one day and observed that the architect used a rule and compasses, and that he made calculations. I inquired what might be the meaning and use of these things. I was informed there was a science called arithmetic. So I purchased a book of arithmetic and I learned it. I was told there was another science called geometry; I got the necessary books and I learned geometry. By reading I learned that there were good books in these two sciences in Latin. I bought a dictionary and I learned Latin. I understood also that there were good books in French. I bought a dictionary and I learned French.'

'And this, my Lord, is what I have done; it seems to me that we may learn everything when we know the twenty-six letters of the alphabet.'

Stone went to London at the age of 23 and published his first work, A Treatise on Mathematical Instruments. Two years later he was chosen a Fellow of the Royal Society. And such was the lesson conveyed to five and ten-year-olds in Boston in 1833, if you knew how to read well you could learn anything you chose by yourself. Let me stick my schoolteacher's nose in here for a moment to say that this is obviously the same lesson I learned at my mother's knee in Monongahela a hundred years after 'The Self-Taught Mathematician' was taught in Boston and two hundred years after Stone himself had learned it. I knew how to read well before I was five, thanks to my mother, and never had much difficulty learning anything I chose to learn after that. It was only after the coming of an enormous, multi-layered, densely articulated form of government schooling, a form imposed on the total population at the beginning of the twentieth century, not with the intention of enhancing *literacy* but of controlling and shaping *behavior*, that Stone's lesson was pushed into the background or in places discarded entirely. Learn to read well and you can teach yourself everything.

I want to show you just how far modem schooling is a radical deviation from the past by taking you back to George Washington's boyhood as the middle of the eighteenth century approached. If you watch carefully as the images unfold you'll catch a glimpse of just what the average kid is capable of if an opportunity is extended to develop fully, and you will even see a little of what simple, inexpensive schooling can do when stripped of administrative ranks, expert hierarchies, specialized materials, and psychological counselors. It will be a revelation so pay close attention!

George Washington was no genius as all his friends would hasten to agree; John Adams, his contemporary, called him 'too illiterate, unlearned, unread for his station and reputation,'; Jefferson, his fellow Virginian, declared he liked to spend his time 'chiefly in action, reading little.' As a teenager Washington loved two things, dancing and horseback riding, and he studied both formally with a passion not supplied by schoolteachers.

These studies paid off for Washington because the grace they communicated to all his actions allowed him to physically dominate any gathering. Think of Michael Jordan the basketball player of whom it has been said he plays so well it's exactly as if the other players aren't even playing the same game. Well, that was Washington thanks to his twin obsessions. Listen to his friend George Mercer describe him as a young man:

> He is straight as an Indian, measuring six feet, two inches in his stockings and weighing 175 pounds....His

frame is padded with well-developed muscles, indicating great strength.

Wouldn't everyone wish this for their own son? Washington got there by spending a great deal of time doing things that government schools ignore and would hardly teach.

Washington was no intellectual giant his friends agreed, but because of the unusual position he holds in American mythology it might be useful to see what subjects his average mind studied as a boy, the better to understand just what it is we have accomplished by 20th century state schooling. First we should note that although Washington didn't attend school until he was 11 (the same age, incidentally, that Woodrow Wilson learned to read) he had no trouble learning reading, writing, and arithmetic on his own. None at all, nor did any of his contemporaries who cared to learn such things have much difficulty whether they were rich or poor. Indeed in most places in the colonies or the early republic you couldn't go to school at all until you had first become literate. Few wanted to waste their time teaching what was so easy to learn. There is an enormous amount of evidence that colonial America was comprehensively literate wherever literacy was valued; children became literate because they wanted to be and because they were expected to be because it isn't hard to do.

But back to George at 11 on his way to school for the first time. What did he begin to study there? How about geometry, trigonometry, and surveying? Is that what your own average-minded 11-year-old studies in sixth grade? Why not do you suppose? Or perhaps you think it was only a dumbed-down version of those things that Washington got, some kid's game. Well, maybe, but how do you account for this? Two thousand days after Washington first picked up a surveyor's transit in school at the age of 11 he assumed the office of official surveyor of Culpepper County, Virginia, a wonderful way to make a living in early America. Not only was the job highly paid but the frontier surveyor could pick out and keep the best land for himself.

For the next three years Washington earned in modem purchasing power about $100,000 a year. Perhaps his social connections helped this fatherless boy to get the position, but in a frontier society anyone would be crazy to give a boy serious work unless he could actually do it. I mean, what would the neighbors say? Almost at once Washington began speculating in land; by the time he was 21 he had leveraged his knowledge and capital into 2,500 acres of prime land in Frederick County, Virginia. Not a bad place then or now to own a few acres.

Washington had no father and as we know he was no genius, but learned geometry, trigonometry and surveying in school starting when he was 11, and he was rich by his own effort at 21. In school he studied frequently used legal forms including bills of exchange, tobacco receipts, bail bonds, servant indentures, wills, land conveyances, leases and patents. From these forms he was able to recreate the theory, philosophy and custom which had produced them. He had an average mind but by all accounts this steeping in grown-up reality hardly bored him. I had the same sort of experience with disruptive Harlem kids 250 years later. They stopped being hoodlums when I gave them real things to do. When did we lose the understanding that young people *yearn* for this kind of knowledge? Or was that yearning disregarded deliberately in order to create a different social reality?

On his own hook young Washington decided to scientifically study what might be called 'gentlemanly deportment', how to be well regarded by the best people. Out of his journals I've taken his rule 56 to illustrate how he gathered his own character in hand, becoming his own father:

Rule 56

> Associate yourself with men of good Quality if you Esteem your own reputation.

A sharp kid, that one, is it any wonder he became our first President?

Washington also studied geography and astronomy, gaining a knowledge thereby of the continents, the globe, and the heavens. In light of the putdowns of his reading you'll be interested to know that he read regularly the famous and elegant 'Spectator' from London, which was sort of like the 'New Yorker' before Tina Brown got her hooks on it. By the time he was 18 he had read all the writings of Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollett, and Daniel Defoe. But he read much more than the great English novelists, he read, too, Seneca's *Morals*, Julius Caesar's *Commentaries*, and the major writings of other Roman generals. What an amazing standard Adams and Jefferson must have had to consider Washington illiterate.

At 16 he began writing memos to himself about the design of his own clothing; years later he became his own architect for the magnificent estate of Mt. Vernon.

George Washington, as we now know, had an average mind in the eyes of the people who knew him best, yet he had no apparent difficulty studying the spots off technical manuals about agriculture and economics without a guide. The mysterious nature of money particularly interested him, he perceived that to the learned money was a much less valuable thing than wealth. Using his own research about such things, Washington was able to figure out that the talk of British bankers, politicians, and creditors about the importance of internationalism and global markets was a cunning way to drain his own resources into their pockets. He saw that the economics of tobacco farming (which had been forced on Virginia) made the tobacco farmer dependent on international factors, put his well-being out of his own control. So Washington, in his early 20s, began experimenting with domestic industry—where he could keep a close eye on things himself.

First he tried to grow hemp. That's called marijuana today, but presumably he was growing it for rope, not to smoke. He was 25. It didn't work. Next he tried to grow flax. He was 28. It didn't work. But because Washington had been educated to think for himself and not to wait for a teacher to tell him what to do he kept trying. At 31 he hit on wheat. That first year he sold 257 bushels. The third year 2,600 bushels. The seventh year 7,500 bushels. He built flour mills in various parts of Virginia and marketed his own brand of flour, think of it, 'George Washington's Finest Home Grown Flour', accept no imported substitutes! While that business was maturing he turned his attention to building fishing boats. By 1772 his boats were pulling in 900,000 herring a year. George Washington was no genius, but partly because he got an education and wasn't compelled to waste all his youth in a government school scheme he did okay for himself.

There is no public school in the United States set up to allow a George Washington to happen; an Andrew Carnegie, from a poor family, who was well on his way to becoming rich at age 13 through a combination of hard work and intelligence, would be referred for psychological counseling; a Thomas Edison would find himself in Special Ed. No doubt about it.

Anyone who can read independently and runs a comparison with the present school product and what the

American past *proved* kids can do will discover the magnitude of our government school institution's negative accomplishment.

3.

In its movement toward programmatic society at the turn of the 20th century, scientific management found ways to break apart the natural sanctuaries of family, religion, tradition and place where a student might flee to escape his allotted mechanical destiny. It is one of the rich ironies of 20th century secular schooling that certain traditional religious groups like the Amish, the Mennonites, the Quakers, the Mormons, the orthodox Jews, The Jesuits and a few others found ways to aggressively preserve religious sources of private meaning—and became prosperous and significant citizens as a direct result. But many of the rest of us were flushed clean away from our roots. We were forcibly retrained to regard our own families, churches and neighbors as expendable, disposable, exchangeable—to think of them as conditional on good performance.

Now if historic families, those timeless families which continue to exist for centuries have one distinguishing characteristic that cannot be duplicated by temporary, rootless families, it is the property of conferring categorical significance on their members. Categorical significance means that you count *because you are*, because you exist, not because of something you can do, or whether you are successful, strong, or beautiful. Being categorical cannot survive grading or comparison. This point cannot be overemphasized because networks which only simulate family, like school, the army, the workplace, your bridge club, etc., just can't do it. Categorical significance is the opposite of conditional significance, that form of status operating in networks where the respect you receive is directly proportional to your performance. The Prodigal Son parable is the Western world's symbolic illustration and it helps to think of it if you want to measure whether this priceless quality is present or absent. Does your family love you in spite of anything? Do you love *them* in spite of anything? Reciprocity in a good family is almost beside the point.

Back to the children I teach. I have noticed no one *talks* to my kids though everyone commands their time. Because of seating arrangements in orderly rows, because of the solitary nature of television and computer operation, my children have very little ability to talk, even to each other. They have been socialized to speak only to children their own age, and then only at approved intervals. Partly as a result of this and partly from a confluence of other reasons, I notice with increasing discomfort that children do not know who they are, where they are, or even what time it is.

Certainly I mean that metaphorically, but also I mean it literally: certain basic tools of self-knowledge like mirrors, maps, clocks, and so on are kept away from children—at least in any classroom you would care to visit in New York City. Other basic tools aren't around either, like hammers, chisels, saws, glue, telephones, calendars, typewriters, paper, pens, scissors, rulers. They just aren't there, at least not in accessible places. Schools are stripped bare of effective tools, not because of lack of money but because the autonomy that tools confer works against the collective socialization logic schools are about.

Tools constitute a curriculum of power. This seems something too fundamental to belabor. It is hard to make tool-competent people into a proletariat. Did you ever wonder why kids don't do the cooking and serving in a school, or the glazing, wiring, plumbing, roofing, and furniture repair? I've wondered about that often. At any rate a malaise follows the withdrawal of tools from common life. Of 62 functioning classrooms in my intermediate school there is a clock in exactly one of them. And it's been years since I saw a student wear a wristwatch. What could be going on? Something spooky I can tell you.

The clock, Lewis Mumford tells us, is the foremost machine of modem technics, not merely a means of keeping track of the hours but a way to synchronize the actions of diverse individuals. And the watch is the personalization of time, a major stimulus to the individuality we cherish as a salient aspect of Western civilization. The turning hands of a watch (not a digital obviously) are a measure of time used and time remaining, time spent and time wasted, time past and time to come. As such it is a key to personal achievement and productivity. The watch is a defense against panic in a time of turbulence such as we all surely agree our kids are living through at present.

Just as my children have no clocks or wristwatches, they are seldom in a classroom that offers a mirror in which to see themselves, to verify their inner states outwardly, to try on attitudes with. A reflecting surface is one important way we come to know ourselves. If classrooms have none, then television—in the mental room it creates—is worse. Television takes a very thin sample of human physical types and broadcasts this unrepresentative fragment endlessly. Most of the black people on television have white features, have you noticed?

How do you suppose that happens? And most of the white kids who are featured in that vaguely precise way we call 'ethnic' are hardly ever shown in television commercials or programming. In the mirror of American school and video-culture, most of us are invisible non-persons, white or black.

Maps and children are kept apart, too, so some of my 14-year-old children think it is 100,000 miles to California, some think it is 9,000,000 miles. I seldom have more than one kid a year who can come within a thousand miles of the reality. My kids don't know what a mile is, not really, although I think they could pass a test on it; in similar fashion they don't know what democracy is, or what money is, or what an economy is, or how to fix anything. They've heard of Mogadishu and Saddam Hussein but they couldn't tell you the name of the tree outside their window if their life depended on it. That's what so-called global thinking since 1910 has done to reality, it put a utopian spin on things. Some of them can do quadratic equations, but they can't sew a button on a shirt or fry an egg; they can bubble in answers with a number two pencil but they can't build a wall. Many of them have no idea that most of the men and women on earth believe in God, or how that might affect the way they live.

The whole dull liar's world that government schooling has created is a form of abstract witchcraft, mumbo jumbo leading nowhere like Mogadishu or Saddam Hussein. The truth is that my kids are unable to plot a future because they don't know where they are or who they are. How can you know who you are if you don't know your own family, and how can you know your own family if none of you are home together very often? Who arranged things this way, because surely they didn't just *happen*?

Nobody I ever taught had any idea how many people live in New York City or what significance such a fact might have, few know what the city abuts upon, how long ago the Revolution was fought there, or why or who the enemy was. *They have been deprived of the proper experience to care about such things.* This is the characteristic profile of a proletariat, it cares about very little except avoiding punishment and filling its belly. People aren't proles by nature but by training, a proletariat doesn't just *happen*, it is *made*.

The fact we are a revolutionary nation and what that did to our subsequent history good and bad has been carefully screened from the view of children, even from ones who can parrot words about Patrick Henry and Sam Adams; the magnificent Second Amendment to our Constitution with its vast trust in the common sense of the common people, and its vast mistrust of government has been perverted by the rhetoric of our academic leadership into an eccentric privilege of misfits and scoundrels. We have the right to bear arms mainly as protection against *our own* government going astray, only secondarily to protect our homes. The proof of that lies in looking at what the British colonists in America did with guns when the British government went astray—they pitched it out on its ears and became Americans. They couldn't have done that without personal firearms. The possibility such a situation might arise again is commemorated in the Second Amendment. But someone decided you weren't supposed to learn that so you don't. Can you imagine why?

In the ongoing condition of derangement among my kids caused by ignorance of basic facts like knowing where they are you'd think one specific remedy would be giant wall maps of the neighborhood, the city, the state, the nation, and the world; you would think these things would be permanent decorations in every classroom and every corridor of the school hive, but you would be mistaken. What maps there are will be found in 'social studies' rooms, but most often not even there. Whose interest is served by kids not knowing basic stuff like this?

I could go on and on about other fundamental, inexpensive tools missing from my students' lives but the point of this progression has been to draw a radical conclusion:

SCHOOL IS A BARRIER TO EDUCATION

It is quite impossible to think this happened by accident, although I am prepared to grant that the original group of social engineers who set up the school machine is dead, and for the most part the peculiar motives they had in a very successful free market in American schooling have been forgotten. School perpetuates itself today in the ugly form it was given originally because it has become the most profitable business in the United States. We need to look no further than that for a conspiracy. Structural reform of schooling would disenfranchise an enormous number of comfortable people. Talk about change is permitted, but never more than minor tinkering follows.

Schools are barriers to the education of children. This is particularly true for children of poverty, but I believe the statement holds for all classes of the young. Schools are black holes. If they miss the decisive significance of a mirror, a map, and a wristwatch, you can be certain anything else of importance has been missed, too. Reform will only come about when there is an angry national debate about the real purpose of these warehouse institutions, a debate in which sham defenses like 'teaching children to read' are finally thrown aside and reality faced square on. Schools do exactly what they were assigned to do in the first decade of the 20th century—they contain the poor. Having taught poor children for many years I don't think they need to be feared any more than rich kids, but I want to be certain to put the bell on the cat. Fear of the poor in the United States first crested with the election of Andrew Jackson in 1828, that's the event that started the real drive for government schools. Who knew *what* the poor were capable of in a revolutionary democracy, better to get them locked up where they could be watched. Fear of the poor crested a second time just before and just after the Civil War when waves of Catholic immigrants from Ireland and Italy poured into this country strong, resourceful, energetic, and child-loving—people with family ties who couldn't easily be pushed around. Trying to push them led to a series of violent national strikes, railroad strikes in Chicago and steel strikes in Pittsburgh. Remember when Andy Carnegie sent an army of Pinkertons to shoot the steel strikers at Homestead? The Pinkertons got shot instead. It was those strikes which finally nailed the children in the school coffin where they've rested for just about a century. What nobody figured on was the ambitious reach of civil service bureaucrats. They would not rest content as guardians of the poor *alone*, but would seek to wax fatter so the destiny of all children would be in their hands. Thus was the road to Outcomes-Based Education paved.

Who will fix this thing now it has become a central core of the American economy, the single largest hiring agent, the largest contractor? We can't count on much help from professional school reformers or from state education departments because the business is their bread and butter.

And yet, even without our experts we're going to have to find some way to sidestep official owners of the school monopoly and relieve the terrible stresses growing up absurd this way causes. The elasticity of our children is nearly exhausted. I've deliberately borrowed a term from the world of structural engineering because I think it applies. When building materials lose their elasticity they don't fall immediately but pass through a stage of plastic behavior, where the deformations don't return to true but take some dangerous and unpredictable course. Our children as a class have begun to display plastic behavior.

What else would you call our world's record teenage suicide rate, teenage murder rate, and our national all-encompassing addictions to violence, alcohol, drugs, commercial entertainments, the narcotic-like addiction we have to magical machines, and a long list of other aberrations. Each generation we have produced since the very recent invention of government compulsion-school seems to me less elastic, more plastic than the one before it.

There are many fine and inexpensive ways to inspire children to provide a first-class education for themselves, we all know a few of them. But whether it's going to be possible to get an education in the new schools of the year 2000 will depend on political decisions made by those who hold power in trust for all of us. Or perhaps I am wrong. Perhaps it will depend on defiant personal decisions of simple people, like the quiet revolution of homeschoolers taking place under our noses right now, which to me seems the most exciting social movement since the pioneers, a revolution in which our type of factory schooling is not contested at all, just treated as monumentally irrelevant, which it certainly is.

Give me a minute to be visionary. If we closed the government schools, divided half the tax money currently spent on these places among parents with kids to educate, and spent the other half on free libraries, on underwriting apprenticeships for every young person, and on subsidizing any group who wanted to open a school a current of fresh air would sweep away the past in a short time. If further we made provisions for a continuous public dialogue on the local level –so that people in the street began to count once again—if we strictly limited political terms of office in order to weaken the protective legislative net around businesses which profit from mass schooling, and if we launched a national program of family revival with all the energy we reserve fo'r wars we would soon find the American school nightmare changing into a dream we could all be proud of.

That isn't going to happen, I know.

Very well. The next best thing then is to deconstruct mass schooling, minimizing the 'school' aspect of the thing and maximizing the educational one. What that means in simple terms is trusting children, trusting parents, trusting families, trusting communities to be the main architects in the training of the young. It means reversing the familiar teacher/student equation so that toxic professionalism which sees teaching, wrongheadedly, as the key to learning can be relegated to the Prussian nightmare from whence it sprang. That's a formula for a priesthood, not for an education. Socrates in the *Apology* told us that if we professionalized teaching two bad results would occur: first, what is easy to learn would be made to appear difficult; and second, what can be learned quickly would be stretched out indefinitely to provide some security for the pedagogue. Is there anyone who doesn't recognize this is precisely what we have allowed to happen? Even this simpler goal of deconstructing institutional schooling will require enough courage to challenge deeply rooted assumptions such as the assumption that the poor are stupid, bestial, or criminal. And it will require a great amount of stamina because this school monster is alive and growing, and very, very strong.

Now let me give you some practical suggestions drawn from a lifetime teaching and thinking about schools. I've arranged them in no particular order. Even invoking a few of these safeguards would bring beneficial changes to a school or district. I have ten suggestions in all, and you will likely have some of your own to add as you hear mine.

1) Make Everybody Teach.

The ghastly proliferation of non-teaching jobs began when it was imposed on schools by local and state politicians and the new Germanic teacher colleges about the turn of the century. It is wasteful and demoralizing. There should be no such thing as a non-teaching principal, assistant principal, coordinator, specialist, or any other category of school employee who doesn't actually spend regular time on intellectual undertakings with groups of children.

2) Simplify the curriculum and make it intelligent.

The purpose which confinement schooling can be most productively turned to is the development of the intellect. Such development is valuable for everyone and my long experience with ghetto kids taught me they are as capable of this development as any. Every other purpose schooling has been turned to is better accomplished *outside* of school, with the time freed up by taking a sledgehammer to the current silliness and confusion; each child could have apprenticeships, internships, and independent study throughout the community in areas of their own deepest concern.

3) Let no school exceed a few hundred in size.

Time to shut the factory schools forever. They are hideously expensive to maintain, they degrade the children they encompass, they hurt the neighborhoods in which they stand, they present ready markets for every kind of commercial hanky-panky. If schools were miniaturized a lot of worthless businesses would go belly-up on the spot. Make schools small and make them independent and autonomous. Everyone knows that is the right way, but not everyone knows that it is the inexpensive way, too. And make these small schools local. Curtail busing, neighborhoods need their own children and vice versa.

And let us save ourselves a fortune although the construction industry will scream bloody murder. Let us recognize there is no proper shape for a school building, schools can be anywhere and look like anything. In a very short time desktop computers will allow libraries of information to be everywhere, too, and contact with the best minds in every pursuit. Then what will the excuse for schools become?

4. Sharply constrict the power and size of state Departments of Education and large-city centralized school boards,

they are a paradise for grifters and grafters and even if they were not their long-range interventions are irrelevant at best and horribly damaging at worst—in addition to being expensive. Decentralize school down to the neighborhood school level. In that one bold move families would be given control over the professionals in their children's lives. Each school under this governance would have its own citizen managing board elected from among neighbors. And full autonomy in purchasing and curriculum decisions. That's not a new idea, that's the way we had it for hundreds of years during which this country schooled—and educated—quite well.

5. Get rid of standardized tests completely.

Measure accomplishment by performance, most often performance against a personal standard, not ranking against a class or larger entity. Standardized tests don't work. Is that news to anybody? What a scam! They correlate with nothing of human value, their very existence perverts curriculum into an advance preparation for the extravagant ritual administration of the tests. Is this a good thing? Why do you think that? If you don't then why do you put up with it? Would you hire a newspaper reporter on the basis of his test scores in journalism? Would you hire a hair stylist who had an 'A' average in Beauty School? Wouldn't you ask for a demonstration? I hope so. The fact is nobody is crazy enough to hire anyone on the basis of grades and test scores for important work with one glaring exception —government jobs, and government licensing. The reason for that is that tests are poor predictors of the future *unless* the competition is rigged in advance by only allowing people who score well on tests to have jobs. That is the whole sorry story of the government licensing racket in this century.

6. End the teacher certification monopoly which is only kept alive by illicit agreement between teacher institutes and the state legislature.

It makes colleges rich, it supports an army of unnecessary occupational titles, and it deprives children and unlicensed but competent adults from having valuable educational connections with each other.

Once again, it's hard to break the *illusion* that certification is there to protect the children so let me help. Think of this: the legendary private schools of this nation, Exeter, Andover, St. Paul's, Groton, Culver Military, wouldn't dream of restricting themselves to certified teachers. Why should we? Let anyone who can demonstrate performance competency before a citizen board, a parent body, or a group of students then be licensed to teach.

7) Restore the primary experience base we have stolen from kids' lives.

Kids need to do, not sit in chairs. The school diet of confinement, test worship, bell addiction, and dependence on low-grade secondary experience in the form of semiliterate printed material cracks children away from their own innate understanding of how to learn and why. Let children engage in real tasks, not synthetic games and simulations. Field curriculum, critical thinking, apprenticeships, team projects, independent study, actual jobs, and other themes of primary experience must be restored to the life of the young.

8. Install permanent parent and community facilities in every school,

In a prominent place near the front office. We need to create a tidal movement of real life in and out of the dead waters of school. Open these places on a daily basis to family and other community resource people and rig these rooms with appropriate equipment to allow parent partnerships with their own kids. Frequently release kids from classwork to work with their own parents, frequently substitute parents and other adults for professional staff in classrooms, too.

9) Understand clearly that total schooling is psychologically and procedurally unsound.

Give children some private time, some private space, some choice of subjects, methods, and even the company they keep. Does that sound like a college? It is meant to. Human beings, a group of which children are a part, do not do well under constant surveillance and tabulation. Keep from numbering, ranking, and labeling kids so the human being can't be seen under the weight of the numbers.

10) Teach children to think critically so they can challenge the hidden assumptions of the world around them including the assumptions of the school world.

This type of thinking power has always been at the center of the world's elite educational systems. Policy makers are taught to think, the rest of the mass is not or is only taught partially. We could end this age-old means of social control in several short generations. What a society would look like where education instead of schooling happened for everyone I have no more idea than you do, but it would restore the exhilarating flux in human affairs we had in the early Federal period of this nation's history under President Jackson—before the dead hand of state schooling closed the door on it. Well, I said ten suggestions, but here's one more, number eleven:

11) We have to get down to business and provide legitimate choices to people.

schooling can indeed be compulsory but education requires volition, *anti- compulsion is essential to become educated*— there is no one right way to do it nor is there one right way to grow up successfully, either. That kind of thinking has had a century and abundant treasure to prove itself and what it has done is to prove itself a fraud.

The word 'public' in our form of public education has not had real meaning for a long time; public schooling will make a comeback when we strip control from the Egyptian pyramid of dubious experts *and force our government to return full free market choice to the people*. This is the only curriculum of necessity we need to see imposed by compulsion on everyone, the return of decision-making power to individuals and families. I hope we won't have to use guns to bring this second American revolution about.

Thanks once again, John. It's a splendid article! Take care of your health. Remember this one?

Button up your overcoat when the wind blows free,
Take good care of yourself, you belong to we!
Eat an apple every day, get to bed by three.
Take good care of yourself, you belong to we!

THE TRANSCENDENTALISTS— HUMANISTIC EDUCATORS OF THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

by Ron Miller

Exactly one and half centuries ago, a humanistic approach was offered to the new American educational system. A small group of bright, young, rebellious scholars—the New England Transcendentalists— proposed a social and educational philosophy which was a clear alternative to the mainstream American ideology adopted by Horace Mann and his colleagues. The scope of the Transcendentalist vision, and the reasons for its failure, can be very instructive to educational reformers today.

'Transcendentalism' has meant many things—both to its participants and to historians. It was a religious, philosophical, and literary movement. It was also an archetypal rebellion of a young generation against its elders, of spiritual sensitivity against rising materialism and conformity, an all-encompassing critique of American society.

Of the ten or so most active Transcendentalists, those who applied the philosophy directly to the education of children were Alcott, Peabody, Thoreau and Ripley. But no account of their ideas is complete without including their mentor, the Rev. William Ellery Channing, and their leader, Ralph Waldo Emerson.

William Ellery Channing (1780-1842) shed the harsh Calvinist theology and conservative politics of his upbringing to become the spiritual leader of the Unitarian movement. He emphasized the innate moral goodness of human nature, the wondrous depths of each person's 'powers of intellect, of conscience, of love, of knowing God, of perceiving the beautiful...' (Channing, 1900). Every individual, Channing preached, is intrinsically worthy, and must be free to develop his or her own inner resources. This trust in the latent capabilities of the human being is the essence of humanism. It led Channing to oppose social and theological limitations on the individual's opportunities for self-knowledge and self-expression. His views on education follow from this.

> *We begin, perhaps, with ascribing a kind of omnipotence to education, and think that we can turn out a human mind, such as we wish it, almost as surely as a mechanic can turn out from his machinery a good piece of*

> *work. But...the human mind is more complex and delicate in nature, and especially more independent and self-active, than we had imagined. Free-will...belongs to the child as truly as to the man; and the child must be the chief agent in the production of his own virtue...It is well that no mind is put into the hands of another to be moulded at pleasure (W.H. Channing, 1880).*

Essentially, Channing believed that the 'object of education is not so much to give a certain amount of knowledge, as to awaken the faculties, and give the pupil the use of his own mind' (Channing, 1900).

Channing himself was known as 'the great awakener'; his humanistic ideas, reinforced by his own sincere spirituality, inspired a generation of reformers. The Transcendentalists were especially thrilled, and though they took his theology a step too far for him (they concluded that knowledge of one's true self is sufficient for knowing God), their ideas and educational projects owe a great deal to his influence.

The leading theorist of the Transcendentalist movement was Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882). His essays and lectures, especially 'Nature' and 'The American Scholar,' announced the arrival of the rebellion in 1836-8. In 'Self-Reliance' (1841), we find the most concise statement of Transcendentalism:

> *The relations of the soul to the divine spirit are so pure, that it is profane to seek to interpose helps. (Emerson, 1965, p. 268)*

Spiritual truth is revealed through a personal communion with Nature, not via social or religious authority.

> *Truly speaking, it is not instruction, but provocation, that I can receive from another soul. What he announces, I must find true in me, or wholly reject. (Emerson, 1965, pp. 244-5)*

Emerson argued that individual integrity and self-purification must be at the root of all social progress.

> *...the secret of Education lies in respecting the pupil. It is not for you to choose what he shall know, what he shall do. It is chosen and foreordained, and he only holds the key to his own secret by your tampering and thwarting*

> *and too much governing he may be hindered from his end (Emerson, 1965, p. 430)*

Emerson was acidly critical of the abstract, bookish approach of most educators of his time; in 'The American Scholar' he lamented that 'meek young men grow up in libraries' instead of learning directly from life. After attending one of Mann's teacher's institutes, Emerson wrote:

> *we are shut up in schools and college recitation rooms for ten or fifteen years and come out at last with a bellyfull of words and do not know a thing. We cannot use our hands, or our legs, or our eyes, or our arms.*

For Emerson, education must be an active engagement of the soul with Nature.

More than anyone, A. Bronson Alcott (1799-1888) expressed this philosophy in educational practice. From 1823 to 1839, Alcott conducted schools in rural Connecticut, in Philadelphia and Boston. He was apparently a gifted teacher with a profound sensitivity to children, and early in his career he challenged prevailing pedagogical methods. In place of drab, uncomfortable classrooms he provided a cheerful environment with child-size desks, a library, slates, and real objects for children to handle and count. He taught through conversations and journal writing. He encouraged imagination, self-expression and self-discipline. He maintained order (reportedly very effectively) by cultivating children's responsibility for the classroom community. This was at a time when corporal punishment was *the* accepted method of ruling a class. Alcott rarely resorted to it.

He was one of the first educators (with Pestalozzi, whom he read) to recognize that children are naturally active and learn through movement. Intellectual and moral training must be integrated with physical education. Alcott wrote that 'Genius is but the free and harmonious play of all the faculties of a human being' (Alcott, 1836). This holistic approach was radical in the 1820's; although a few educational pioneers approved of his methods, Alcott was mistrusted by the parents, who wanted their children drilled in 'book larnin'' and disciplined the old-fashioned way. Many removed their children and opened competing schools.

Alcott was also a religious seeker with a mystical temperament. He was unsatisfied with orthodox churches and was naturally drawn to Transcendentalism. By 1834, inspired by extensive readings of Romanticism and Idealism, he had evolved a deeply spiritual philosophy of education, and, encouraged by Channing, he opened the Temple School in Boston. A fine summary of his approach is given by Cremin:

> *The grand object of the curriculum was not learning in the traditional sense but rather self-knowledge— that understanding of the true idea of one's own being that permits one to use one's God-given endowments for the growth and perfection of one's spirit .(Cremin, 1980)*

The purpose of life, to Alcott, was the cultivation of each person's spiritual essence. Children, as yet uncorrupted by 'custom and convention,' were open to direct inspiration if encouraged by the teacher. Alcott believed that Socrates and Jesus were the ideal teachers, for they sought to draw out the intellectual and moral qualities already latent in the human soul.

In 1835-36, Alcott reached the peak of his influence as an educator. Temple School, considered the best in the city, was attended by forty children from Boston's leading families. In 1835, Alcott's assistant, Elizabeth Peabody, published *Record of a School,* a diary of the daily proceedings, which was well-received. Emerson was excited by it and soon arranged to meet Alcott; their friendship lasted until Emerson's death.

But in 1836 and early 1837, Alcott published his two volumes of *Conversations With Children on the Gospels,* which revealed the fundamental radicalism of his approach and shocked his patrons. Essentially, Alcott was claiming that children's direct intuition of spiritual truth superseded the authority of churches and social custom. Immediately he was branded a threat to morality and social order. Newspapers ridiculed him. Even Channing expressed doubts (which embittered Alcott), and only the other Transcendentalists came to his defense. Temple School closed in 1838; Alcott tried another school, but because he admitted a black student over the opposition of other parents, this school failed in 1839. He was left with five pupils; three of them were his own children, including 6 year-old Louisa May.

Bronson Alcott never taught school again. In 1847 he offered a lecture for Mann's teacher's institute, but Mann turned him down because his political views were 'hostile to the state.' After Transcendentalism died out as a radical movement, Alcott gained acceptance, and served with distinction as school superintendent of Concord, Mass. from 1859 to 1865. But the idealism of Temple School was never realized again in his lifetime.

Elizabeth Peabody (1804-1894) deserves further notice. She devoted most of her life to education, but unlike Alcott, was careful to bridge the gap between Transcendentalism and American society. After serving as Channing's secretary from 1825-1834 (while also conducting her own school), she joined Alcott and contributed to the success of Temple School. But she dissociated herself from *Conversations* and left the school. In the 1850's she advanced the teaching of American history in public schools, and from 1860 on was the leader of the kindergarten movement in the U.S.

Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), the self-sufficient naturalist and political essayist, was for a time a pioneering educator. In the winter of 1835-36, while a student at Harvard, he taught in Canton, Mass. and boarded with Orestes Brownson (1803-1876), the mercurial left-wing Transcendentalist who was then a Unitarian minister. I have been unable to determine the extent of Brownson's (or, for that matter, Channing's or Alcott's) influence on Thoreau's teaching approach. Thoreau was a Transcendentalist by nature (!) yet this letter to Brownson (seeking a teaching position after graduating college) contains ideas that very few Americans of the 1830's except for Channing and his protégés, would have had:

> *I would make education a pleasant thing both to the teacher and scholar. This discipline, which we allow to be the end of life, should not be one thing in the schoolroom and another in the street. We should seek to be fellow students with the pupil, and we should learn of, as well as with him, if we would be most helpful to him....It hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive the full import of that word—freedom—not a paltry Republican freedom, with a posse comitatus at his heels to administer it in doses as to a sick child—but a freedom proportionate to the dignity of his nature.*

Thoreau found a teaching job at home in Concord in the fall of 1837. He lasted two weeks. When a school committee member came by and found discipline too lax for his taste, he admonished Thoreau to apply corporal punishment. With characteristic sarcasm, Thoreau chose a few students at random, flogged them, and then resigned. He later began teaching four boys in his mother's boarding house, and in September 1838, took over the abandoned Concord Academy. His brother John joined him early in 1839, and for the next two years they ran a successful progressive school.

The Thoreaus were rigorous instructors, and prepared the older boys in traditional subjects (including Latin and Greek) for admission to college. Discipline was strictly maintained, although without punishment; each incoming student was asked whether he was committed to his studies, and if he became unruly, he was reminded of this pledge. But beyond the classroom routine, the school was noteworthy for the field trips which Henry led into the countryside and the shops of the town. He gave the students hands-on experience in surveying and other skills. And by all accounts, the relationship between teachers and students was unusually intimate for its day, marked by mutual respect and affection. The school only closed, in April, 1841, because of John's failing health. Although Henry tutored occasionally, his heart was no longer in teaching, and in 1845 he went to live at Walden Pond.

In his writings, however, Thoreau returned to education from time to time. He consistently stressed that true learning arises from one's direct experience of Nature.

> *If I wished a boy to know something about the arts and sciences. ... I would not pursue the common course, which is merely to send him into the neighborhood of some professor, where anything is professed and practiced but the art of life. (Thoreau, 1950)*

Finally, consider the school at the Transcendentalist-inspired commune, Brook Farm. George Ripley (1802-1880) the founder and head teacher, was himself a brilliant scholar who doubted the value of purely intellectual education. He wrote to Emerson in 1840 that the goals of Brook Farm included forming 'a more natural union between intellectual and manual labor than now exists; to combine the thinker and the worker, as far as possible, in the same individual' (Rose, 1981, p. 133). The Brook Farm school did combine rigorous college preparation with opportunities to work in the community. There were field trips, music and dancing, and visits by the stimulating Transcendentalist celebrities. The faculty was skilled and beloved; the relationship between teachers and students was close, and discipline was relaxed.

The school was the most successful part of the enterprise, even attracting students from outside. But it is significant that the school did not survive outside the protective atmosphere of the commune. Brook Farm lasted from 1841 to 1847, and its failure coincided with the decline of Transcendentalism as a social movement.

Conclusion

The Transcendentalists were humanistic educators because they believed that the purpose of education was to unfold the potential human qualities of every child. Schooling must not be confined to intellectual drill or training for employment or citizenship. But this has always been a minority view. A pure Transcendentalist pedagogy—theorized by Emerson and Thoreau but practiced fully only by Alcott—was too anarchistic for accepted political and religious beliefs, too egalitarian for a patriarchic society that condoned slavery and was forcing Indians off their lands, and too "romantic" for the new urban/entrepreneurial/materialist identity of the emerging nation. In 1846 Transcendentalist idealism was shocked by the U.S. invasion of Mexico, and in 1850 by the Fugitive Slave Law.

American values have not changed much. Instead of Mexico we are bullying Central America. Conservative religious and social attitudes continue to limit educational progress; in some states even corporal punishment is making a comeback. The lesson for humanistic educators is this: although we believe passionately, like Alcott, that the unseen depths of the child's soul contain miraculous treasures, most of the public is not interested in them. Peabody, Thoreau, and Ripley were successful because they accommodated the demands of society; and it was Horace Mann, a middle class lawyer and politician, who captured support for public schooling, because he claimed that it was the best way to preserve social order and traditional values.

So each of us must decide how to confront the American educational climate. We can fight the establishment and suffer Alcott's fate, or withdraw into "new age" enclaves like Brook Farm, or, like Peabody, we can moderate our more radical ideas and possibly, though there are no guarantees, contribute to a slow, gradual humanization of society.

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Taken from the Journal of Humanistic Education for Spring, 1986, with thanks to Ron Miller. Sorry it took so long to print it in ΣΚΟΛΕ, Ron, because it is a splendid article. I am rather glad that it highlights a different aspect of Unitarianism from that described by John Taylor Gatto!

As a birthright (but now disillusioned) Unitarian who was still saddened by John's castigation of Unitarianism as partly responsible for our dreadful schools, I am relieved to find my own erstwhile educational heroes thus rehabilitated by Ron!

I grew up reading Louisa May Alcott's books about school—and my school is partly patterned on hers—or her father's. I lived three miles from Concord, and actually learned to swim in Walden Pond!—and so I do rather hate lumping these folks in with cold-blooded theorists like Horace Mann. I mean, how can you find fault with a man who writes, as Emerson does,

> **Truly speaking, it is not instruction, but provocation, that I can receive from another soul. What he announces, I must find true in me, or wholly reject. (Emerson, 1965, pp. 244-5)*?***

TWO BY COURTENAY:

IF YOU COULD REALLY SEE ME

If you could really see me as I really am,
without the masks behind which I hide to protect myself
And without the distortions with which you protect yourself
from what is really there,
You would not recognise me from the person you know
and you would know me.

You would know that I love the fragrant beauty of trees;
they touch my soul somewhere like a brother or sister.
The angularity of twigs, sharp smells of resin,
the gentle fronds of leaf
& the heavy fatness of nut, fruit & berry all speak to me.
You would know also of when I have cut down such trees
with an unfeeling chain-saw just to improve a view.

If you could really see me
you would know of how often I have lied, stole or cheated;
mainly from strangers.
There is a callousness and indifference that I have used to
Justify these acts within my mind.
I do not really know them or you.
And you would know too of the generosity I have
when what I have is genuinely yours for the asking
and my house is your house.

You would know too of the way
in which I can be touched by Spirit;
that touch that lifts my spirit with an exquisite calm joy.
Sometimes that happens when we touch,
or when I tell you of my Self
or sometimes when I am alone watching the sun set over the bay.
There is also a daemon inside of me that delights in strife,
with long gory fingernails that can rend and tear in twisted rage.

If you could see the Me that lies behind the pride & arrogance I
use to cover my fears,
maybe you would not reject me so quickly.

If you could put aside your own fears of invasion & more clearly see my fears of rejection, maybe you would come to realise that I am not really the aggressor that you fear, for your fears and my fears make it so that we can never really see each other.

If you could really see into the depths of my heart, you would know exactly how much is true when I say that I love you.
If you look into the depths of your heart, you will know whether what I really am is what you really want.

MOTHER'S ANGER

Tread softy as you walk upon my gentle earth.
I am sleeping still and do not wish to wake.
You, my children, to whom I've given birth,
Please listen now for all our sakes.

At first your play was loving, soft;
My hills and valleys rang with mirth,
So that I did allow, but
Your games are irritations now.

All is not well, it seems.
You have grown unkind and begin to trouble my dreams.
Your roads begin to bind me; cities press their weight.
(Tracks and towns I tolerate)
You furrow my skin, spend my riches in your haste,
And turn my trees to waste.
You spread your poisons wide and dig for fuel deep,
Yet still I sleep - but my dreams for you grow troubled.

Fear lest I wake:
Lest fire spews and mountains quake:
Lest seas rise up or ice-age shuts the door on your short lives:
Or lest I change my track around the sun.
There's little fun in being fried.
Your weather's presently quite mild and shacks and surface scrapes contrive.

All that of course would change and you've nowhere else to hide.
The mother sometimes turns against the child.

You cut my hair and break my very bones—for toys!
You plunder secret treasures, kill the seas.
Treat me with some respect, please !
My sanctuaries reverberate with noise.
Why all this strife ?
Sacred hoards, not necessarily laid down for you, are scattered wide.
You hew down stately trees—for paper, boards.
I'd planned for you a very different dream, a glorious fate.
You could not wait.

A while ago, I woke with hate and changed my face.
My children then, dinosaurs long-lived but slow, are old stones now.
It was their turn to go.
They were so very dull!
When next I wake, I won't discriminate between those of you with grace
and those who wreck a dream made long ago.
One cannot check a total cull of those who desecrate.

So tread softly as you walk upon my gentle earth.
Your childish mirth may change to dread
When I give birth to children more considerate.

Courtenay Young, an extraordinary person who is many things as well as a poet and an English body psychotherapist, has lived and practiced his profession at Findhorn, a spiritual community in Scotland, for a number of years. Your editor was privileged to visit with him at two conferences of the European Association of Body Psychotherapists in Europe, in 1991 and 3. We exchanged poems!

SCHOOLING + DIPLOMAS = JOBS?

by Pat Farenga

Is it really true that more schooling will lead to a better job? Do people with school credentials perform more skillfully than people without them?

The media have long pounded the drum about the need for schooling. But the statement that bothers me most is the one that keeps getting repeated year after year: the more schooling one has, the better prepared one is for a well-paying job. Fortunately there is a history of research on the connection between employment and education, and by examining it, even briefly, we can see that education's promoters are quite selective in what studies they publicize. Let me cast aside for now the issue of whether anyone can discern the future in such detail that they can know what specific skills and knowledge our 10-year-olds will need to know when they are 30. What I want to know is, does possession of school credentials, particularly diplomas, really mean people are better qualified for a job?

In 1971 various studies of the links between employment and school credentials, plus original research on the subject, were analyzed by Columbia University's Ivar Berg and published as *Education and Jobs: The Great Training Robbery* (Beacon Press, 1971). It would be hard to summarize this book without going on for some time, so let me mention just a few highlights. One of Berg's studies examined the educational histories and job performance of air traffic controllers in the FAA. He notes that when he studied FAA performance evaluations, "College graduates were least likely to have received honors; the most awards were earned by non-college graduates without managerial training ... There is, in fact, more evidence to support the proposition that educational credentials as such have relatively little bearing on performance ... ."

In his concluding chapter Berg focuses on the educational establishment:

> "Education ... is the most important non-defense activity in the public sector as a field of government employment. Its growth has been accompanied by a dramatic change in the academic achievements of teachers— so dramatic that today [1971] as many as three-fourths of all jobs defined as requiring college degrees

> are teaching jobs. Not all teachers have such academic achievements, of course, but the figures are impressive.
>
> 'Meanwhile, the number of teachers increased by almost 50 per cent from 1950 to 1960, a rate of increase much higher than that sustained by the work force, which grew about 15 per cent in the same decade. One can conclude, accordingly, that the mounting demand for education feeds in no small part upon itself.'

Educators and politicians ignored Berg's analysis, especially his recommendation that government policies should allow for other ways, besides college, to enter professional careers. Ignorance may be bliss, but this is a very costly bliss, not only in dollars but in people's time spent in school when they could be pursuing more meaningful projects. For instance, a study entitled *Learning: In School and Out, by* Dr. Lauren Resnick of the University of Pittsburgh in 1987 concluded that the vast majority of skills taught in school are not transferable to the real world. 'Growing evidence ... points to the possibility that very little can be transported directly from school to out-of-school use,' writes Dr. Resnick. The FAA, industry, and educators have all made it more difficult for non-credentialed people to get jobs despite evidence that alternatives to school credentials not only work, but are more cost-effective than additional years of schooling. People now need college degrees for jobs, such as being an air traffic controller, that until recently were done just as well by people without such credentials.

The connections between diplomas and jobs are much more tenuous than we are led to believe, and yet much of our national school debate keeps coming back to defining what and when children should learn in order for them to be prepared for what President Clinton described in one of his Satellite Town Meetings as the 'high-skill, high-wage jobs of today.' Does a twelve-year long checklist of skills really help us prepare people for work? Where, precisely, are these 'high skill, high-wage jobs of today?'

There is much evidence from alternative schools as well as homeschooling that there is no need to create and enforce a check-list of skills in order to prepare children for the world of work. Homeschoolers who follow little or no set curriculum, and who often receive no official credentials, continue to get into the worlds of work and college without special difficulty; we've been printing such stories for seventeen years now. The Sudbury Valley School, which has no set curriculum or grading system, has published the results of a study of its graduates and finds them all doing well either in college or in work (*Legacy of Trust:: Life After the Sudbury Valley School Experience*, Sudbury Valley Press, 1992). *The Eight-year Study*, commissioned by the Carnegie Foundation in the late 1930s, proved that learner-directed, experimental schools using a wide array of alternative methods of learning prepared their students for college as well as, and in some cases better than, traditional high schools and prep schools. Non-traditional colleges, such as Marlboro, Bennington, and Goddard, had been in existence well before the 1960s popularized them. They have no grades and no preset courses of study, yet their graduates find work and take their place in society. Finally, we all know examples, and many teachers know this too, of children who couldn't do well in school, but who excelled outside of school. James Herndon, for example, wrote in *How to Survive in Your Native Land* about a student who couldn't solve simple math problems on a blackboard but who could keep score for large bowling tournaments. Yet professional educators choose to ignore such examples and insist, as the American Federation of Teachers has for years, that performance in school should be linked to eligibility for work, so if you fail math in high school, you can't become a carpenter as an adult, and so on. Despite the contrary evidence I've mentioned, and there is more, we are faced with national policies that insist that the best way for the equation of schooling + diplomas = jobs to be solved is for others to dictate what we should know and to sort out the winners and the losers as defined by the educational standards.

If only the real world would cooperate with this linear equation! But the real world is non-linear and it changes much faster than the world of school ever can. For instance, John Gatto has pointed out that most adults who now use computers have pretty much taught themselves how to use them at home, at work, and in banking, without formal schooling. Some of us may take a course on our own initiative to learn more about how to use computers, but this is not the same as having school and business officials decide that we must take a course in order to use our computers better. Nonetheless, we often hear that we need schools to "teach children how to use computers," as if this is the one and only time they will get to learn such skills and as if using computers is an incredibly complicated, specialized process that can only be taught to the young in classrooms.

So the drums beat on for more and more schooling for more and more jobs. "Without an educated workforce we can't grow this economy or remain competitive,' the President told a Satellite Town Meeting audience. Of course, education is meant to be synonymous with schooling in such statements, and this isn't a perspective that is unique to President Clinton. This whole national goals and standards business started with the Bush administration, which proves that pedagogical hubris—defined by Ivan Illich as human beings doing what God cannot, "namely, manipulate others for their own salvation'—knows no political boundaries.

The most disturbing thing about the schooling + diplomas = jobs equation is the assumption that these 'high skill, high wage jobs of today' really do exist in abundance. Certainly some new fields, such as biotechnology, might require specialized skills and knowledge, though I strongly doubt that school is the only place where people can learn these things. But we must remember that there will be, as there always is, a limited number of openings for these jobs. Like architects, English majors, and engineers in the '70s, our children may spend time and money getting diplomas for school-defined jobs, only to find that the market is glutted with graduates like themselves. In 1971 Berg warned of the social problems that will be created as more and more 'unemployed college men' must face the music.

Since there is no actual connection between diplomas and job competence, it is plain discrimination to fail to hire people due to their lack of schooling.

That was 1971. What about today? In the *New York Daily News (11/30/91)* a story with this headline ran in the Business section:

SCHOOLING IS OUT. '90S JOB FORECAST IS FOR LESS EDUCATION.

I quote from that article:

> 'More than three-quarters of all jobs in New York State during the 1990s will require a high school education—or less—with most of the growth in the service sector.'

Samuel Ehrenhalt, regional commissioner of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, said yesterday."

Following this up, I went directly to the U.S. Department of Labor's own statistics *(Occupational Outlook Quarterly*, Spring 1992) and found that the service sector "is projected to add the largest number of jobs of any occupational group by 2005." The jobs highlighted for fastest growth in the service sector are correction officials, firefighters, guards, police, detectives and special agents, chefs, cooks, kitchen workers and "food and beverage service workers," salespersons, clerks, cashiers, receptionists and secretaries, nursing and home health aides, childcare workers, janitors, groundskeepers.

Add to this mix the fact that employment prospects for American youth are the worst in years, and one wonders where all these "high skill, high wage" jobs are. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "While the nation's official unemployment rate is a nagging 7%, it is three times worse among 16-19 year olds. For young people ages 20-24, the rate is 50% higher than the national average."

Where you study appears to matter less than *what* you study. Economists Thomas Kane and Cecilia Rouse say that those graduating with a bachelor's degree from a four-year institution or an associate's degree from a community college do not earn significantly more than those with similar numbers of college credits but no degree. In other words, it is course work, rather than the credentials, which count in subsequent earnings. For homeschoolers, this means that it will in many cases be more important to document what you have done than to worry about getting a diploma. Further, since there is no actual connection between diplomas and job competence, it is plain discrimination to fail to hire people due to their lack of schooling.

As the job and schooling markets keep growing apart, as more unemployed or underemployed college graduates enter the workforce, homeschoolers are showing that completing years of schooling is not the only way to learn or, ultimately, the way to get a good job, and that the jobs school prepares students for may not be worth the social and personal costs.

***This article by Pat Farenga is taken from* Growing Without Schooling *for Jan.-Feb., 1994. Pat is the publisher of* GWS, *and a valued contributor to* ΣΚΟΛΕ.**

U.S.-RUSSIAN 1992 ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION TOUR

by Jerry Mintz and friends

For several months we prepared to bring this group of students and teachers from alternative education background to Russia to help run a teacher-training seminar. These plans, to our delight, were realized. On February 24th, 1992, seven teachers and four students left for Russia.

INFORMATION ON EUREKA FREE UNIVERSITY SEMINAR PROJECT

Media interest in transformations in the new Commonwealth of Independent States has been intense. But one important aspect of the story has been overlooked: the remarkable changes that are taking place in their educational system, including explorations in the field of alternative education. Alternative education is a non-traditional, participant controlled and interest based approach to learning. These new educational creations are in danger of not surviving if help is not provided to them soon.

I had the opportunity to witness these developments first hand last summer when I attended their First New Schools Festival, which was in the Crimea, in August. I left Russia one day before the coup. Recently, I was invited to come back, and to bring other American teachers and students with me.

On February 24th, we took a group of 7 children, from age 12 to 18, and 4 teachers to Russia, to help lead a teacher training seminar to demonstrate democratic education and alternative educational approaches. The seven students I brought were from alternative education programs in the United States, and met with more than 25 of their counterparts from alternative education programs in Russia and other countries in the new Commonwealth, who also made presentations. There were 175 teachers from the new Commonwealth taking the seminar. The resulting conference was electric. It was sponsored by the Eureka Free University, the first private university in Russia. Alexander Adamski is the President. He has been honored as the Soviet Union's Journalist of the year. He was also an

editor of Democratic Russia, and has reprinted in it portions of a directory of alternative schools that I edited.

This Seminar was an amazing and positive act of faith in the midst of the chaos of the new Commonwealth. Educators in the USSR are actively seeking new ways to teach democracy as a living experience. "If we are going to have a democratic society we must have democratic education." said Alexander Tubelski, who is principal of a 1000 student experimental school in Moscow.

Last Summer, I attended the USSR's First Festival of New Schools, as a representative of the alternative education movement in the United States. The Festival was organized by the Creative Teacher's Union, and supported by Russia's Ministry of Education, and its Minister, Edward Dnieprov. Before traveling to the Festival in the Crimea, our group had a meeting in Dnieprov's office at the Ministry of Education. The Festival itself was the first alternative education gathering in the former Soviet Union, and one of the most unusual I have ever attended. However, this seminar plus previous and subsequent visits to alternative schools in Moscow and St. Petersburg were equally powerful, with American conferences paling by comparison, primarily by their lack of significant student involvement.

Traveling by train from Moscow, we came together in Narva, Estonia, at a resort on the Baltic Sea. At this Seminar, each alternative education had a "day" to organize the conference. In addition, we were given the responsibility of the whole youth program, for the week that we were there. We organized a "school within the conference," and out of that developed a democratic meeting, which ultimately organized our "day." Much to the surprise of the Russian teachers, the American students, some as young as 12, ran many of our workshops. Our workshops included the areas of homeschooling, movie production, youth problems, non-competitive games, philosophy, art, poetry, and religion. The Russian teachers and students were astonished, not only by the American teachers and students' democratic approach, but also by how easily the Russian students adopted it, and by the freedom and openness expressed by the group. As one 12 year old Russian boy said, "The day the American free schools presented was wonderful for me. The American kids are more open than we are and that openness I acquired from them. It became easier to be open. The feeling of rushing disappeared in me, and I felt less stress."

In visiting St. Petersburg after the Seminar, we were met by Larissa Mironova, whose designation last year of Director of Alternative Education for St. Petersburg was something of a joke, because there were no alternative schools there at that time. Now there are ten, and we can only describe the situation as being something akin to the 60's here, but with one big difference: These rapid changes have the support of public school administrators and others in influential positions. For example, we visited one school in St. Petersburg that was given two floors of free meeting space in a public building, and we heard of other private alternative schools that were meeting in spaces provided in public school buildings. Also, Oleg Gazman, special advisor to the Minister of Education of Russia was a prominent participant in the meeting of the "Consortium of Avant-Garde Schools and Centers, Free Schools in a Free Society," which followed the Narva seminar. But Gazman, himself said that after another month, no one knows where the money will come from to keep going, including his own job.

I was named as a western representative. It is a responsibility that I am taking seriously, and I was asked to find American support for the continuation of this movement in Russia and the other republics. As one of my first tasks, I am trying to get support so that they can have a Second New Schools Festival this summer.

Of course, it is really difficult to communicate what we all saw and felt through this adventure. So far, I have not been successful in doing so. I can tell you that both the American and the Russian children cried when they parted at the railway station after the conference. But maybe it is best summed up by 12 year old Valeara, a student at an alternative school in Krasniarsk, Siberia, when he said, "What moves the future? We realize that there is a future and we affect the future and vice-versa."

Interview With Valeara, At The Narva Conference:

My name is Valeara. I am twelve years old. I live in Krasniarsk. It is in Siberia, about 3600 kilometers from Moscow. My father repairs boots and my mother is a nurse in a kindergarten. I have one brother, 8 years old. We are friends in general, but sometimes we have conflict. I would like to be an actor or a dancer and go to a dancing college (he's studied dance for 6 years). On the other hand, maybe I'll be a writer and enter the literary college.

When my teacher, Sergei Kurganov, told me he was going to this conference and wanted to take us, he was allowed to take only five children. He said to the class that those who felt like going to the conference should raise their hands. Five people raised their hands, and they went to the conference. First he told us that we would go to Moscow. I was delighted when I found out that I'd not only see Moscow, but also Estonia. My mother didn't let me go on the previous trip.

At my school we sing songs, but more often we have discussions. We play very little. But I think I play enough. At my school we start the day asking our teacher a question for future lessons. Maybe we dislike some of his ideas and have some other ideas. In many cases he teaches the things we are interested in learning. I am fond of literature now. I enjoy reciting poems. I also write my own.

However, I usually feel a lot of pressure because of the society of our class. The children of our class are not like me. I feel pushed into a corner. They are pushing me to be just like them. There are three others like me who express themselves differently and are pushed to the corner like me. One of them is my friend. We help each other. We support ourselves in the way of our thinking. I think that the teacher doesn't realize that this is going on. For our teacher, it is like we are one student, with no differences between us. I feel that at your schools I'd be able to do something about it. But I can't trust the pupils in my class.

The day the American free schools presented was wonderul for me. The American kids are more open than we are and that openness I acquired from them. It became easier to be open. The feeling of rushing disappeared in me, and I felt less stress.

At this conference I learned to more openly express my feelings. I think it is bad to be too reserved. If you think something, you must say it. I made friends here and got acquainted with many interesting people. I'd like to go to the United States some time to share my experiences in life.

I've have lost all my concerns about Russia and the future because I'm living in a happy world here. But I am worried about how high prices are. We're saving every rouble and don't buy expensive food. What moves the future? We realize that there is a future and we affect the future and vice-versa.

This article is the first installment in a series of writings about Russian alternative education brought back from the1992 trip. They are taken from Jerry's newsletter AERO-gramme.

EDUCATION TRUTHS

by Linda Dobson

Presidential candidate Bill Clinton told the National Education Association, "You'll be my partners. I won't forget who brought me to the White House." Is it because he understood his new partners' agenda *so well* that he chose a private school learning experience for daughter Chelsea? Certainly, here was a clue to the condition of public schools that the nation's education consumers should have heeded. But, alas, no alarm bells went off.

In June, two astute *Forbes'* reporters presented chilling evidence of the National Education Association's abuse of its monopoly and political and financial manipulation of the American education system. I could forgive a 2.1 million member union for possibly violating American constitutional principles as they spend $16 million each year on PACs if it was improving our education climate. After all, our public school teachers willingly contribute the money from their salaries. However, the *Forbes* report clearly indicates *the rise of the NEA is directly linked with a simultaneous 30-year decline in American education and corresponding staggering increase of its cost*. This clue, which should have fallen like a sledge hammer on parents' heads, hasn't awakened anyone, either.

What would you think of a dentist whose assistants leave town to get a tooth pulled? Or a restaurateur whose kids would rather pay for a Big Mac than choke down a free burger at Dad's place? Or 22% of NEA teachers *(twice* the national average) who send their own kids to private school? I think they all know something the consumer-at-large doesn't.

I think these teachers realize that the foundation of American public schools rests on myths about education that just aren't true today, if, in fact, they ever were. Good ol' William Torrey Harris (US Commissioner of Education at the turn of the century) was greatly responsible for turning schools into institutions—gray, drab, bureaucratic places that effectively separate youngsters from the real world, real people, and real work, continually perpetuating his mistaken notions about the purpose or education. Through attempts to teach all children the same thing at the same time in the same way, Harris' goal is reached: "Substantial education, which, scientifically defined, is the subsumption of the individual." Our schools create the robots who Harris described as "careful to walk in prescribed paths, careful to follow the prescribed custom."

Attempts at reforming current educational practices merely perpetuate something that should have died, or at least evolved, long ago. It probably would have, too, had education not turned into the huge, and, therefore, powerful business it is today. How much money do we have to feed these hungry giants before somebody who could really change things (Are you reading, Bill? Hillary?) listens to the increasing numbers of parents finding different ways that work? That work well. Less expensively. Joyfully.

The largest—and happiest—part of my job as News Watch columnist for *Home Education Magazine* is studying the growing mountain of national media coverage this education alternative generates. Yes, you're right—it doesn't work for everyone. But it *can* work for a lot more families once they understand. Once they examine their own educations to discover real selves buried under layers of programming, they can see the true meaning of learning. Beyond worksheets, tests and grades. Beyond the institution of school.

This study, and the subsequent exercise of educational freedom available at the home/family level, has brought forth some basic, education truths our leaders would be wise to consider carefully. You've probably already heard some of these truths in other contexts. No matter, they are as valid for learning as anything else.

We can learn (better) when we follow our unique interests. A nationalized curriculum won't help schools any more than a local, or state curriculum. When was the last time you saw a six-year old child interested in doing the same thing as 25 other six-year olds, for six hours at a stretch, outside of a classroom? If individual curiosity and imagination don't get time in the sun, how will they ever blossom? There's a definite correlation between our insistence on lining kids up in rows and giving each a precisely measured dose of whatever it is we deem important, relegating diverse and personally meaningful studies to oblivion, and our lack of scientists and mathematicians.

There are many paths to the mountain's peak. Those making money from the status quo will never share this truth with you. But the path American education took to fulfill the needs of the Industrial Revolution is not the only path. Indeed, this path is suitable to covered wagon travel, while alternative educators daily discover paths along which the Concorde could fly. Bypass the tangled clutter of bureaucracy, overgrown weeds of complacency, and the fallen, rotten logs of empiricism, and you'll be surprised how smooth—and enjoyable—the journey becomes.

If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always gotten. There's not a single, successful enterprise on earth today still doing business with methods unchanged since the early 1900 's. If our graduates can't cut the mustard in 1990's business, their antiquated education is to blame.

The real world offers quantity and quality of learning experiences superior to institutionalized education. Yes, folks, I'm saying we can learn without being taught, without a certified expert controlling each step until .knowledge, chopped and diced into measurable portions, becomes an education void of dignity and value. Maybe those bells ringing at 45-minute intervals all day contribute to shortened attention spans and the inability to attach significance to the learning experience.

Learning is a lifelong, joyous process. The person who emerges from the typical public school education understanding this truth is a rare bird, to be sure. Why do we insist on shoving school down our children's throats, focusing on an economic victory as a final reward for their suffering? In our rapidly changing world, can we continue turning kids off from the very learning that makes life fulfilling and happy as well as productive? 3500 teens drop out of school each day.

Our accepted methods never let them experience the joy and wonder inherent in the journey.

In *Advice to Youth*, published seventy years ago, Mark Twain said, "The history of the race, and each individual's experience, are thick with evidence that a truth is not hard to kill and that a lie told well is immortal." Say it isn't so, Mark. For our children's sake, say it isn't so.

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Linda Dobson, Home Education Magazine's News Watch columnist, writes that she is still learning at home along with her three children. I say she is also a super, feisty, involved person, and I would love to have been one of her kids, way up there in the Adirondacks!

Linda's the one who sent me the Forbes article on the NEA that was in the winter issue of ΣΚΟΛΕ. Maybe I should ask Linda to send me a regular column too. Only, do Helen and Mark Hegener pay? I bet they do! Darn. Maybe I'll win the Publishers' Clearinghouse lottery. Ha ha.

SON-RISE: THE MIRACLE CONTINUES

by Barry Neil Kaufman

The miraculous story of my son's healing journey from infantile autism to fullness of life.

Raun was placed in a category reserved for all those seen as hopeless, unreachable, a tragedy. For us the question: could we kiss the ground that others had cursed?

His little hands hold the plate delicately as his eyes survey its smooth perimeter. His mouth curls in delight. He is setting the stage. This is his moment, as was the last and each before. This is the beginning of his entry into the solitude that has become his world. Slowly, with a masterful hand, he places the edge of the plate on the floor, sets his body in a comfortable and balanced position, and snaps his wrist with great expertise. The plate begins to spin with dazzling perfection. It revolves on itself as if set into motion by some exacting machine. And it was.

This is not an isolated act, not a mere aspect of some childhood fantasy. It is a conscious and delicately skilled activity performed by a very little boy for a very great an(l expectant audience, himself.

As the plate moves swiftly, spinning hypnotically on its edge, the little boy bends over it and stares squarely into its motion. Homage to himself, to the plate. For a moment, the boy's body betrays a just perceptible motion similar to the plate's. For a moment, the little boy and his spinning creation become one. His eyes sparkle. He swoons in the playland that is himself. Alive. Alive.

"If Raun was to get help, if this little autistic boy could be reached and brought into our world, it would have to be done by us and us alone."

Raun Kahlil. A little man occupying the edge of the universe.

Before this time, this very moment, we had always been in awe of Raun, our notably special child. We sometimes referred to him as "brainblessed." He had always seemed to be riding the high of his own happiness. Highly evolved. Seldom did he cry or utter tones of discomfort. In almost every way, his contentment and solitude seemed to suggest a profound inner peace. He was a seventeen-month-old Buddha contemplating another dimension.

A little boy set adrift on the circulation of his own system. Encapsulated behind an invisible but seemingly impenetrable wall. Soon he would be labeled. A tragedy. Unreachable. Bizarre. Statistically, he would fall into a category reserved for all those we see as hopeless, unapproachable, irreversible. For us, the question: Could we kiss the ground that others had cursed?

Autism. Infantile autism. A subcategory of childhood schizophrenia. The most irreversible category of the profoundly disturbed and psychotic. Could the word destroy the dream, forever limiting the horizons of my son, and damn him to a deviant and sealed corner of our lives?

Just a hypothesis; yet it seemed correct. As I continued to observe my son, my recall sharpened. Suddenly, I could see the words lifting off a page in an abnormal psychology text my professor used in graduate school. I remembered a fellow student giving a short report on autism, saying that all the literature and evidence suggested these children were irretrievable and that most spent their lives locked up in state institutions. But now, I was not considering a statistic in a book or a sarcastic remark about a dysfunctional child. My God, this was my son. A human being.

We scheduled examinations. Several physicians and neuropsychologists identified Raun as classically and profoundly autistic as well as functionally retarded in his abilities. One test yielded a below-30 I.Q. score. Professionals marveled at our ability to detect autistic symptoms in a child so young. And yet, we found the bizarre and unusual behavior so pronounced that we could see no way not to acknowledge that something had gone terribly wrong.

One clinician shook his head sadly as he viewed Raun spinning happily around and around in dizzying circles. He muttered, "How terrible." I responded by saying that we never wanted to look at our son, or any child for that matter, and think or see "terrible." We were not in a state of denial. Our son looked as if he had just been dropped here from another planet. However, we wanted to see his uniqueness, his singularity, even his wonder, yes, even his wonder. The clinician now looked at us rather sadly and tried to convince us of the unfortunate prognosis for this condition. His associate suggested that we were lucky to have two normal children. In effect, he said, we should focus our attention on them and consider eventual institutionalization for our son. Never, ever, did we want to see our child through their eyes. My wife, Samahria, and I kept telling each other, it's just their judgments and their beliefs. No one can tell the future, not even these specialists.

> **"Raun was a flower, not a weed; an adventure, not a burden. What others portrayed as an affliction, we began to hold as a gift."**

We decided to be hopeful even if others called such a perspective unrealistic. Without hope we had no reason to go on.

After the evaluations, we were left with ample diagnoses and test scores, but no help. All our efforts left us with exactly what we already knew. We no longer wanted more confirmations. We felt we had to intervene, now. Each day we could see him slipping from us withdrawing more and more becoming more encapsulated.

We knew that now it would be up to us and to him. Perhaps it had always been that way. All the diagnoses and analyses might have statistical meaning to a number-hungry society, but they had none to a little boy with staring eyes. If Raun was to get help, if this little autistic boy could be reached and brought into our world, it would have to be done by us and us alone, now, while he was young, now, while we were wanting, now, while he was still happy in his infant playland.

We had little to work with but our own deep desire to reach Raun and to help him reach out to us. The professionals offered no real hope or help, but in our love for our son and his beauty we found a determination to persist. All alone, Samahria and I. Holding it together. What did we know about our son? Definitely distant and encapsulated, but gentle, soft, and beautiful. Raun was a flower, not a weed; an adventure, not a burden. What others portrayed as an affliction, we began to hold as a gift. We never felt obsessed, just dedicated and committed.

Samahria and I held hands together late one night as we watched Raun sleep in his crib. We glanced at each other. We knew. We had decided. We would intervene and try to reach for our son, no matter what it took!

We had formulated a three-pronged program. We had already begun to demonstrate the attitude of approval and acceptance that would underlie every approach, every attempted contact, and every movement we made toward our son.

Second, we would offer him a motivational therapeutic experience. Show Raun the beautiful and exciting world that welcomed him! Show him that it would be worth his extra effort to depart from his ritualized arena. We knew that our son would have to stretch himself beyond any present limits; he would have to climb the highest mountains just to accomplish what other children do with ease. Only the most motivated person would attempt such a journey.

The third phase would involve developing a teaching program for him that simplified every activity and every event into small and digestible parts. We would help him dissect his external environment into comprehensible portions so that he could build new pathways and construct new roads where old ones might have been damaged or broken.

We chose to make contact in an environment free of distractions. Samahria and I decided the optimum room for this was the bathroom, where we could limit interference from audio and visual bombardment.

Those first days marked the beginning of a very intimate human experiment. Samahria sat quietly with Raun for hours. Together, but separate. Raun stared at his shoes; then moved to his hands and finally fixated on the lights in the ceiling. Samahria watched, then joined his movements, searching for a meaning, hoping for some ever so-minute indication that Raun was aware of her and interested in her presence. His alert eyes seemed like mirrors that reflected instead of absorbing or sending information.

Finally, Raun shifted his eyes. He dropped his gaze to some vague spot in space directly in front of him. Then he began to rock back and forth rhythmically. An eerie humming sound echoed from his throat, two notes timed to match each forward and backward movement. Samahria rocked with him now and sang in harmony with his song. Then, she concentrated on the same empty space, finally locating a spot on the wall and focusing on it. As she leaned forward, the spot became larger. As she rocked backward, the spot became smaller. She moved to Raun's

" The hours became days. Most of the time Raun behaved as if he did not know that Samahria was there. And yet she knew, somewhere deep inside, that Raun knew she was there, that his awareness of her increased each time they came together."

rhythm, feeling his body and hers arcing through the air in the same way. Raun lost himself in the motion.

Samahria's participation in Raun's movements was neither passive nor peripheral. Her genuine involvement and her sincere enthusiasm for these activities allowed her to share his world and, she hoped, communicate her love and approval. Samahria stayed fully active, but gentle; fully alive, but peaceful.

The hours became days. Most of the time Raun behaved as if he did not know that Samahria was there. And yet she knew, somewhere deep inside, that he knew she was there, that his awareness of her increased each time they came together.

On the eleventh day, after spinning with him for over two full hours, Samahria noted a single, casual, sideward glance at her. She acknowledged and softly cheered his action. That night, we celebrated that first self-initiated look from our son as if it had been a gift from heaven.

We continued our program of sensory enrichment and stimulation with Raun. We expanded the time frame, working with him every waking hour (about twelve hours each day). Every morning, Samahria entered the bathroom, giving our son continual input and exposure to gentle, loving, yet energetic and playful human interaction. In the evenings, before our nightly analysis of each day's process, I would sit alone with one or both of our daughters on the stairs that faced the closed bathroom door. We heard soft talk, laughter, clapping, singing, and silence. We had brought the best of the world into that tiny little room and made of it an amazing human laboratory. On weekends, I joined with my son. Our program ran seven days a week. Rather than draining our vitality, it dramatically energized our spirits.

One evening, nine weeks into our program, we sat with Raun in our bedroom and watched him walk around and play with our shoes. Suddenly, passing in front of the mirror, he became captivated by an image he saw there. Although he had certainly passed by the mirror many times, tonight something notably different happened. He stopped, startled by his own image. For the first time, he appeared mesmerized by a commanding form, the full length reflection of himself.

He surveyed his image cautiously. He moved back and forth, left to right. He walked directly to the mirror and touched his reflection nose to nose. His eyes beamed like electric lights. He moved out of the path of the mirror, then slowly looked back into it. As he did, he met his own face, saw his own eyes. He moved directly forward again, touched his belly to the belly of the child in the mirror, then tipped his head to the mirror as the twin facing him duplicated his movement with absolute precision. Suddenly, he emitted a wild, unfamiliar sound, a cry of incredible excitement and joy. He began to grunt and laugh with elation. Raun Kahill had discovered himself. I turned to Samahria, amazed and dazzled. Tears streamed down her face. I felt wetness under my own eyes and realized that I, too, was crying. The first day of creation, a new dimension. Raun had found himself, and it was a joyful experience.

Each unfolding week ushered in new accomplishments, new breakthroughs. Yet I kept reviewing an area I knew to be critically important to Raun's ability to think and ultimately talk.

"No one can ever guarantee that someone you love will change or be healed, but embracing that person with respect and happiness can only be a gift for the giver and for the receiver."

Each evening, for weeks, I put him through the same test, hoping in this way to help him accomplish the near impossible. I would greet him in the kitchen and show him a cookie. When he put his hands up for it, I would slowly move it away while encouraging him to follow it with his eyes. Then I would make a great show of putting the cookie behind a piece of paper. He would lose track of it once it disappeared from sight and then stand there confused. He still could not keep an object in his memory when it was out of view. He still had a limited ability, at best, to solidify images in his mind for future reference. Developing and perfecting this area was critical; it would serve as a foundation on which he could build language.

We began the eleventh week in the program. As I carne through the side door after a day at work, I bumped right into Raun, who had been standing by the table. He peered up at me very casually, brought his right hand up from his side as if to take the oath of office, and then moved his fingers up and down against his palm. My God, he was waving hello!

Dumbfounded, I waved back. He watched me for several seconds and then looked away. What a simple and profound hello, the best I had ever had! Three months before, if I had walked through the door and thrown a hand grenade, Raun would never so much as flinch or look up at me. Now this little man greeted me with a sweet and understandable gesture. My number was coming in. We were both the winners.

There was still enough time for Raun and me to play our favorite game before Samahria put him to bed. I took a cookie off the counter and showed it to him. I put it on the center of the floor, calling his attention to it. Then, as he watched, I ever so slowly placed a newspaper over it, hiding it from his view. He paused, staring at the paper for almost a minute. Then, with very little overt expression of interest, he walked over to the paper and sat beside it. He studied the photographs on the front page. His glance moved slowly across the newspaper and lingered at the edges. Samahria and I looked at each other, waiting silently. We had seen him do this before, each night, without ever going further.

But then, with a careful movement of his hands, Raun pushed the paper aside, sliding it off to the right until he had uncovered the cookie. Without ceremony, he picked it up and ate it. A random accident? We could only guess. We held our breath, reviewing the event excitedly. Try again. Take the chance .

I took another cookie and showed it clearly to Raun. I put it on the floor in another part of the room and slowly placed another piece of newspaper over it. From the corner of my eyes, I noted his primal intensity like an animal poised to pounce. My neck tightened and a flutter of energy ran through the upper part of my torso. As soon as I stepped out of the way, he followed swiftly in my tracks, lifted the newspaper, and quickly plunged the cookie into his mouth.

Amazing! He seemed filled with a new sense of authority, a new confidence. Had it really happened? Did this mean that he could hold images now in his memory and use them?

I grabbed a handful of cookies. I put one under the base of a light chair in full view. He followed, quickly lifted the chair, and took the cookie. I put another on the counter out of sight. He again followed, lifted his hand, and felt around the top of the counter, his little fingers walking around the formica until finding their mark. He grabbed the cookie and rewarded himself. I placed a cookie on top of the chair. Another under the pillow of the couch. Another inside my clenched fist, which he soon assaulted and forced open. Determination. He found every cookie. We applauded and cheered him. We were drenched in our exuberance. And he was too.

Although we both realized what this new milestone could mean, we encouraged each other not to form any expectations.

Allow Raun to develop his own capabilities at his own rate, we agreed. We trusted that when he wanted to and could participate and learn more, he would.

The periods between those times when he appeared remote, aloof, and self-stimulating became noticeably more productive. He became increasingly willing to interact. In the park one day, he approached several children playing in the sandbox. When they offered him a shovel, he scooted away. But then, from a distance, he watched them closely. Perhaps, for the first time, those random, unpredictable events around him had begun to make sense. Several minutes later, Raun turned and looked directly at one little boy standing near the swings. He smiled at the child and then, with no apparent warning, walked right up to him and hugged him, placing his cheek against the little boy's face. The youngster became frightened and started to cry. Our son backed off immediately, confused and concerned. He mimicked his little friend, scrunching up his face as if he too were sad. After several minutes, when the other child stopped sobbing, Raun moved cautiously toward him again and stroked his arm. His new friend eyed Raun curiously, then smiled. With this act of communion, this sharing of affection, a very delicate and often-times frail human being had made his mark.

This day, the sun began to rise in Raun's eyes.

We continued our intensive program with Raun for another three years, working twelve hours a day, seven days a week, until he showed no trace of his autistic condition. By age five, this once-withdrawn, mute, under-30 I.Q. child was demonstrating a near-genius I.Q.

Now twenty, Raun thrives in his second year of college. He has a girlfriend, participates in his university's intercollegiate debating team, joined a coed fraternity, became politically active (working in the last presidential election), and chose biomedical ethics as his major area of study. Out of eight hundred applicants from undergraduate and graduate schools throughout the country, Raun was among fifty selected to design and teach courses for inner city junior high students in a special summer program. Next year, he becomes an exchange student at a university in Sweden, where he will continue his education and pursue his interests by studying Sweden's health care system.

I don't remember asking God and the universe for a profoundly neurologically disabled child. Sure, both Samahria and I wanted the best for ourselves and our family. What we didn't know in the first moments of realizing that our son was different is that God and the universe had given us the best: we only had to discover it. And the discovery was not so much a revelation as a creation. We had to teach ourselves how to see differently and be far more open and loving than ever before. I used to think we were so alone, our family and our son. I used to think that no one really cared or wanted to understand. Perhaps, for a time, that might have been true. But now, as I watch the courage and magnificence of other parents using an attitude of love and acceptance to help their children, I am profoundly moved. Their commitment to change themselves for the love of a child speaks to a deep place inside. No one can ever guarantee whether someone you love will change or be healed, but embracing that person with respect and happiness can only be a gift, a gift for the giver and a gift for the receiver.

Now twenty, Raun thrives in his second year of college with biomedical ethics as his major area of study. Next year, he becomes an exchange student at a university in Sweden."

I don't know what's around the corner. I don't know what unanticipated challenges tomorrow will bring. But I do feel blessed to realize that I can continue to teach myself to be open-hearted and to search for the lesson of love in every moment.

"What began with one special child in a bathroom as a unique experiment has blossomed into a method of working with children from all over the world who face special challenges."

Barry Neil Kaufman is the founder of the Option Institute in Sheffield, Massachusetts. His books include, among others, **Son Rise, A Miracle to Believe In, Happiness is a Choice,** ***and a new book entitled:*** **Son Rise: The Miracle Continues,** ***from which this article was excerpted.***

For more information on the many programs offered at the Option Institute, write 2080 So. Under Mountain Road, Sheffield, MA 02157 or call (413) 229-2100. One of these—the Son-Rise Program, based on their work with Raun Khalil—is designed to help parents of special children. Here is one of the many success stories.

JULIE'S STORY

told by her father John

Julie was having ferocious temper tantrums where she'd knock everything off the countertops and table. She'd eventually drop to the floor in hysterics; once in a while she'd even bite her arms and hands. It would last until we practically had to sit on her to stop her from hurting herself. As Julie drifted more and more into her own world, life became unbearable: the constant and fierce temper tantrums, the loud endless crying and screaming, the destruction of our household possessions and the physical damage she did to herself.

One day while I was at work, Laura called up, hysterical. She said, 'You've got to come home immediately.' So I came home, and I saw that the house was in a shambles. Tommy's face was all scratched up and bleeding. Tina, our oldest, was crying and Julie was on the porch with a devilish look on her face. She had done it all! We lived on pins and needles. We became prisoners in our own home.

We both started to get really frightened. Julie was still very young, and we could barely manage her physically. What would we do in a few years when she was larger and more powerful?

Before I came to The Option Institute, my feeling was, 'Oh, she's an autistic child. She's a special child. She has to be worked with in a very special way that only the experts know. Only these teachers and Special Ed personnel know. They have multiple master's degrees and so forth. I'm just an accountant. I don't know about these things.'

The most wonderful thing that happened to me when I was at the Institute was seeing how easy it was to do what needed to be done for Julie. It was quite a departure for me, changing from a serious, methodical person into a childish, crazy joker, in order to be with my daughter.

I found that I totally had to change my conception of how to be with Julie. She was the teacher now. All I had to do was motivate her and connect with her. That was my guiding thought throughout the four years we did the Son-Rise Program with her. 'I don't have to sit and teach her anything. All I have to do is be with her. If she just loves to be with me, she'll want to do things with me.'

My wife and I both learned how to be more accepting of ourselves and each other. And what we learned about Julie has proved to be enormously successful with our other three children as well.

I used to get up in the morning at six and be at work at seven and by nine have a splitting headache. Now I get up at six, work with Julie till ten, go to work on Cloud Nine, and smile at all the people who have headaches there. I just say, 'Hey, I am having a wonderful time!'

The last four years have been the most magical years of our lives. Earlier this year, I was alone in the kitchen one morning making my breakfast. Suddenly I heard footsteps and a little voice saying 'Daddy! Daddy! I am so excited. Today is the day of my dance recital.' Julie walked into the room with a radiant smile on her face. She looked me straight in the eye, held my neck, and hugged me tightly.

'Daddy, it's going to be the real thing today,' she said. 'Are you going to be there with Mommy?' she asked.

'Of course, darling,' I replied, 'I wouldn't miss it for the world.'

'I am not shy, Daddy, I know all my steps, and I'm going to be a good dancer like Mommy and Tina,' said Julie.

With that, Julie ran upstairs. I walked down the stairs and sat down on the chair in Julie's playroom. I was filled with an overwhelming gratefulness to God. He had blessed us with a precious and wonderful gift, our Julie. And not only did we discover her, but we also discovered ourselves. And in the process, we achieved great joy, tranquillity, and inner happiness in our lives. What more could we ask for?

This account of apparently impossible healing journeys into life for totally unreachable children is reprinted with permission from Bears Kaufman from* MIRACLES: the Power of Love in Action*, a periodical published by the Miracles Community Network, a non-profit corporation registered in New Mexico. Tax-deductible contributions are encouraged.* Miracles Magazine *features the work of contemporary healers and stories of healing. Yearly subscription inquiries may be addressed to* MIRACLES MAGAZINE*, P.O. Box 418, Santa Fe, NM 87504-0418, (505) 989-3656.

I can't resist adding one additional note: In case any of ΣΚΟΛΕ's subscribers is tempted to write off these stories as unlikely, I should just like to add my own experience as testimony. Nancy Mittleman and I were among the first "class" doing the Option Process at the Institute in Sheffield, and had a chance to get to know Raun at the age of nine , as he moved easily and gracefully in and out among all of us strangers .

He was friendly, engaged, evidently highly intelligent, and perfectly at ease. A couple of years later I spent about six months or so working with one of the Option trainers, coming to the Institute once a week, and also got to know two new children, Teo and Ravi, adopted by the Kaufmans from orphanages after being labeled as hopelessly damaged—one by starvation, the other driven mute and withdrawn by the shock of murderous violence on the part of the father—but now happy, energetic, totally normal little boys laughing, playing, running freely about the grounds. I also got to watch some of the work being done with a little girl, Mimi, who had arrived at the Institute very close to death by starvation, having refused food for months, even vomiting up food introduced via a gastric tube inserted directly into her stomach.

Working with Mimi entailed agreement on the part of everyone including members of her family that it was Mimi's right to die; that if this was her choice, everyone would accept it totally. Only after this issue had been fully established was it possible for the work to begin. Watching this tiny child take on learning to live, a bit at a time—to eat; to speak; to interact; to love; and finally, to bloom into a healthy, happy, loving little person—was an experience I shall not forget!

NINE YEARS OF NCACS DOINGS:

During her term as Newsletter editor, Rosalie Bianchi wrote up her items on my Apple IIE computer. She left all that material with me when she and her husband moved to North Carolina, and it has been sitting on my computer ever since. It occurred to me that it might be of interest to NCACS members, both long-time and recent, to look over once again some of these events of our common history. And since it is a simple thing (now that we have Microsoft Word in System 7) to make the transfer from the Apple to the Mac, I am going to be reprinting some of these items in future issues of ΣΚΟΛΗ. Being a history buff, I am concerned that we keep our history fresh in our minds and hearts!

This first collection of items concerns conferences of the past, both national and regional:

1985 CLONLARA CONFERENCE
by John Boston

I attended the annual national conference of the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools (NCACS) from Wednesday, April 24 to Sunday, April 28, 1985. It was hosted by the staff of Clonlara School in Ann Arbor, Michigan. I met some of the most wonderful, kind, loving people in this movement.

The National Coalition is involved with empowering people, all people, with control over their own lives. Home schooling is involved with empowering children with control over their own education. Some people consider this as very structured schooling at home, others are extremely unstructured. But we all agree in removing the power to control our own lives from the state institutional systems to restoring that power to the family. With that common denominator, the conference was a successful networking get-together. On Friday night, Saturday and Sunday morning the public was invited to attend workshops. More than 600 did attend. John Holt spoke Friday night and Saturday. Vendors displayed educational materials and home business people were there to show their programs.

Children from home schoolers as well as older alternative school students had rap sessions (with and without adults). They even put on an impromptu play (Little Red Riding Hood and all the Forest Animals). Adults, some campers, some sleeping bags in homes and some motelers also rapped and just had a good time finding out and sharing—in general gaining more control over their lives.

It was like any network meeting of families but this time the families were from all over the United States. I was the furthest away and along with Colorado, New Mexico and Texas represented the Western Region. I was elected Vice President for next year and volunteered to host the national conference two years from now; April 1984. I will need lots of help and you can start volunteering any time now.

Next year the Eighth Annual National Conference will be held at Upattinas Alternative School in Glenmoore, Pennsylvania. I will be there.

At this year's convention the Coalition members decided that the time had come for more affirmative action in order to accomplish the following:

1. Find new schools to add to the membership.
2. Find out what effective ideas alternative schools have developed.
3. Communicate these ideas to member schools and other educators, and the general public.
4. Help the existing schools to survive, encourage new schools to start, and provide resources to both. In particular, to help scholarship funds so that the schools can continue being non-elitist, non-discriminatory, and available to all.

In order to begin accomplishing these things, the Coalition has moved its National Office to Glenmoore, Pa. in office space made available by UPATTINAS School. Sandy Hurst, Director of UPATTINAS is the new President of the Coalition, and Jerry Mintz, founder of Shaker Mountain School in Vermont was asked to become Executive Secretary, and has been setting up the national office at UPATTINAS.

John Boston is the director of the California Coalition of Alternative Learning Situations and was on the board of directors of NCACS at the time.

1986 UPATTINAS CONFERENCE
by John Boston

There were over 300 children, women and men attending the conference and staying over night at Upattinas School. We slept mostly in their classrooms and on mats on the gym floor. Luckily Upattinas had a kitchen and the parents of its students did the cooking with our assigned clean up duties. The cost was $20 for everything for six days. One night all the parents of Upattinas brought a pot luck dinner for us. Those attending were from all over the world. An alternative school from Japan, Global School, sent 8 students and an exchange student at Clonlara School, MI, also from Japan.

Last year's conference was great and this year was no exception. It is the kind, loving, concerned people (adults and children) that make these conferences unique. We had workshops, meetings and guest speakers and everyone was treated as an equal. The young people had a dance, to tapes and record every night. Then on Saturday after the talent show, a band from the local area, whose members included graduates from Upattinas played until midnight. Yes, I danced too.

The keynote speaker was Shelley Berman, Co-founder of Educators for Social Responsibility. His speech was entitled 'Commitment to the Future in the Nuclear Age'. His main points revolved around the goals of ESR. He gave examples of how we can help young people understand the issues related to the arms race by participating in discussions with them. By helping students learn the skills of analysis, cooperation and negotiation we can help insure the survival of humanity. In the community ERS is organizing for informed and widespread debate on the arms race, rational defense policies and new social and economic priorities. He said his organization is striving to develop students' critical thinking skills through classroom educators. If you are interested in learning more about ESR write: ESR, 23 Garden St., Cambridge, MA 02138.

Mike Salvatore from the New York City School District told about his City-as-School program. A program that allows students to develop their own curriculum with advisors using the entire city as their resource. It is a public school program with grants from the U.S. Department of Education.

Pat Montgomery from Clonlara School presented the Peace Pole Project. It started in Japan to spread the words—MAY PEACE PREVAIL ON EARTH and to act as a constant reminder for peace.

A ninety-one inch 4x4 post with the words MAY PEACE PREVAIL ON EARTH painted on metal strips in Japanese and English (or any other language) is erected with a public ceremony and media coverage for any organization that wants this to happen. If interested write: The Peace Pole Project, Route 1, Box 253, East Jordan, Michigan 49727.

During the general session on Sunday morning, resolutions were discussed and agreed upon. One was a resolution supporting the repeal of P.L. 93-531, The Navajo-Hopi Land Settlement Act. The federal government has been relocating thousands of Native Americans from their lands. (See article on Big Mountain in this issue). Another resolution was a re-statement of the resolution made last year on support of the Contadora Peace Plan for Central America. Three more alumni of alternative schools visited Nicaragua and again reported to us the need to help them settle their differences peacefully.

During the conference word was received from Washington that the bombing of Libya was about to begin. We went on record against The U.S. using force to deal with the situation.

The Free School in Albany, N.Y. showed us how they buy run-down row houses, fix them up and rent them to low income families that attend their school. People from alternative schools came from Massachusetts, Michigan, West Virginia, Texas, Wisconsin, Tennessee, Washington, D.C., Pittsburgh, PA. and Chicago, Ill. Home schoolers came from Ohio, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Maryland. Dorothy Werner came representing H.O.U.S.E. (Home-Schoolers from Illinois). Ed Nagel from The Santa Fe Community School did a take off of Mark Twain on Monday night that just brought the house down. I'll have to tell you in person about his trip across the Atlantic Ocean in a sailboat.

During the last general session, the group chose California as the next year's site for the national conference. People are already starting to raise money for the trip out here. And of course, yours truly, Vice Chairperson, is in charge of the conference. Not being a community school with facilities, it is not going to be easy to host over 600 people from California and all over the nation. So I am appealing to you out there NOW to help with any ideas and actual sites (cheap or free) you may know about. I need a committee to start planning so if you can volunteer—write to John Boston, California Coalition of Alternative Learning Situations, P.O. Box 92, Escondido, California 92025.

ALL ABOUT THE TRIP

by Meg Gold

We took a Checker limousine with four doors and five windows on each side, and the color is a yellow-orange. I brought much too much stuff (which I'm sure I'm not the only one). It seemed to be quite a long time before we even got to the first couple gas stations, let alone Texas. But I really like it over some parts of Texas, because it was so peaceful, so quiet, and yes, so beautiful. In fact there are lovely places wherever I go, as well as everyone else, but some of them don't seem to notice.

Anyway, we were on our way to OK. I've traveled through Oklahoma ten trillion times, but I've never gotten tired of it. All this time, I was extremely excited to go to the annual conference. I have everyone as a friend, and I was wondering who would show up. Only two students came on this trip, and they were me, and my brother Jason. The two adults were Ed Nagel and Lucia Vorys. It was a real blast watching them do shifts on driving. They came up with this one technique called "Pouring ice water over their head." On top of everything else, we had to take these two old people named Martha and Edgar back to their place in Toledo, Ohio. So, you guessed it, we also dragged with us a utility trailer. It was packed full of stuff. But we won't go into that.

So, after all the traveling and all the pretty sights, we finally got to drop the old people and the old things off (quite reluctantly, after we saw the place!), but we still had the community trailer hitched on the limo. Next destination, Ann Arbor, MI for the conference. Ed felt so bad about dropping the old folks off in a place like that, and he was constantly talking about ways to help them.

We sure got a lot of neat looks from the people in Michigan. I was having so much fun looking at everybody's expressions. I was also pleased because the flowers were in bloom there, and stuff like that. We finally got to Pat Montgomery's house where we were supposed to stay. We reached the town Ann Arbor two days early. And it was night, so we just decided to go to a motel and stay there the night. It sure was different to sleep on a real bed. That was a pretty nice motel.

But (getting back on the subject), we did get to the house a day early, instead (Well, heck!! We're never on time!!!!)! I was so excited. My heart was nearly jumping out of me! Then, next day, a lot of people came, and other people stayed at friends' houses or something. A lot of my friends didn't show. But I did meet A LOT MORE FRIENDS THAN I KNEW WHAT TO DO WITH!!! In fact, I had and still have, no enemies. While we were gone, my mother Mary was holding down the roof (just barely).

At the conference, there were hardly any good workshops. The only one I liked that I attended was the Gymcana. The one I hated was that one called 'paranoia'!!! It made me look like a fool (and I am talking literally!!!!!)! Gymcana is kind of these two trampolines. Both had different games to play on them. One is where you jump over a swing, and for each jump you do, they higher it. I only got to eight, but this one eleven year old got to about eleven jumps. Nobody, not even teenagers, could beat this score. And then there's the other one where you have to jump and put it through the basket, and if it comes back, you have to catch it.

We stayed for four days extra. The last day wasn't so hot. Ed left so he could sail across the Atlantic Ocean, and come up to France. It was a long way home, yes indeed. I came back to find that the green weeds to replace grass had GROWN. Everything was twice as beautiful as when I left. I didn't want to leave on such a bad note, but it had to be done. Now I am back and things are back to normal, all except the good friends I had left behind, and now I am as bored as I ever was!

Meg Gold, then age thirteen, was a member of the Santa Fe Community School

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL AS COMMUNITY COMES OF AGE

by Rosalie Bianchi

Seven teachers and eight children ranging in age from four to twelve arrived home shortly after midnight last Sunday night, tired but happy, following their long trek home after attending the annual conference of the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools at Upattinas School in suburban Glenmoore, Pennsylvania. These travelers were all members of The Free School in Albany's South End, a pre- and elementary-age alternative school which has flourished quietly (with one or two dramatic exceptions) in its present location for over a decade, and is currently one of the oldest of such schools throughout the country.

"This is the biggest gathering we have ever had. There were even eleven free schoolers from Japan. It was wonderful to be with so many people who understand what we are doing in education," commented Mary Leue, founder and emeritus director of The Free School. "None of us has much money, but somehow, this did not seem to be a central issue for most of us any more. We are becoming a world-wide family, a community. More and more families are realizing how poorly traditional education meets their needs. I think our ways of teaching and learning may be coming of age."

Over three hundred people attended the week-long conference, playing, talking, eating, singing and dancing, sleeping packed together chock-a-block in sleeping bags on the floors of Upattinas School's gymnasium and classrooms, attending workshops and discussions three rows deep in some cases, watching an in-house, improvised talent show, or just hanging out renewing old acquaintances amidst this friendly, relaxed family atmosphere which is the hallmark of the style of alternative schooling.

Right in the middle of the week, Jerry Mintz, former headmaster of Shaker Mountain School in Burlington, Vermont, and current Executive Director of the national association, came into the gathering in Upattinas' central meeting room waving a copy of the *New York Times*, which featured an article about the conference on the front page of its education and family life section. "It felt to us like the beginning of an idea whose time has come," said Barbara Coleman, director of The Free School. "Everyone thought alternative education had died, because of the fact that it stopped being news. But we've been here for sixteen years, and hope to be here for many more to come.'

The Free School, and the community which has grown up around it, has recently received national attention from a group calling itself Action Linkage, which operates out of Tucson, Arizona, but has participating members all over the country. Featured on page one of *The Action Linkage Quarterly* is an article by Mrs. Leue entitled 'The School That Grew a Community,' which describes the many activities and services engaged in by The Free School community. These innovative activities include a cooperative investment and insurance group which the community calls 'The Money Game,' the Family Life Center, housed in a row house four doors from the school, and other celebrations of life at holiday and birthday times. Their 'work parties' which take place nearly every weekend as members of the school and community come together to upgrade the status of one of the ancient and originally dilapidated buildings in the South End now owned by the school or community members, in a manner reminiscent of the communal efforts of the Amish and Mennonites of Pennsylvania and Ohio.

The Free School group described the operating of the community in a workshop they presented during the conference. 'We celebrate all the holidays including Christian, Jewish and pagan,' laughed Nancy Mittleman, mother of two Free School school children and a teacher in the school since 1975. 'I am not Jewish, but last year my husband and middle daughter, who are, wanted us to start observing Jewish customs, and we now observe Shabbat every Friday evening at home. It has brought us much closer together, and has been wonderful for the community too, as, for example, our community seder on Passover.'

The Family Life Center includes a weekly personal growth group of twenty-one members, currently in its twelfth year, a natural foods cooperative, a reference and lending library on a wide variety of topics of concern to families as well as a large fiction collection, and a pregnancy and childbirth support group, the educational aspect of which, co-coordinated by Mrs. Leue and Betsy Mercogliano, both RN's as well as teachers, has, since 1978, been helping couples find the kind of information and support they are looking for. Mrs. Leue and Mrs. Mercogliano have also been acting as labor coaches for several years, attending couples giving birth in the hospital, and believe that birth goes more smoothly and develops fewer complications when a friendly, familiar support person is present during the process.

'I worked in the delivery suite for two years,' says Mrs. Mercogliano, who had two stillbirths and has one daughter, now approaching three years of age, 'so I know that the hospital is the safest place for many, perhaps even most, people to give birth, but it still scares me. A well-known and friendly face is a blessing, and if you also know that that person has had good experience with the process of birth, it helps you relax and let your body do its work. Being scared stops that from happening very well, and often some sort of outside intervention is required for successful birth to take place.' Mrs. Leue cites a study reported three years ago in the favorably comparing outcomes for midwife-supported birth with birth under the supervision of an obstetrical team which cited midwife-supported birth as significantly better in most important respects.

The growth group, which Mrs. Leue describes as 'the heart of the community,' was started to facilitate cooperation among the family and staff of the school. 'The group has given us a place for working out our interpersonal hangups and receiving support for making personal changes in our inner lives, and has become the glue that has kept us together and allowed us to cooperate effectively in all our enterprises. We all know we can trust each other to keep agreements and to accept challenge in good faith. I believe this is a rare commodity in our society,' she says.

Speaking further of local media coverage about the school a year and a half ago, Mrs. Coleman commented,

> No one in the media ever seems to report our successes. The only coverage we have had in recent years was when a child in the school developed shigella (amoebic dysentery). Somehow, they picked up the information, and we were mentioned in the press and on television as having had to close. What was unclear in that coverage was that the chief of the County Health Department had mentioned that shigella was also going through several nursery schools in the area, and was not caused by negligence on our part. In fact, it was on our own initiative that we closed during that period.

THE ESCONDIDO (CA) CONFERENCE (1987)

by Terry ......

Excitement built as we were working on drafting the program and schedule, printing and mailing it—also apprehension. We had no idea what the response would be but we had committed ourselves—what if nobody came? We continued to prepare for a moderate sized event of 100-150 people, cleaning up messes, readying the kitchen, counting out sleeping spaces, etc. As people from the Northeast region trickled in during the first two days it indeed appeared that the conference would be moderately attended. Simultaneously the phone reservations began pouring in. By Wednesday evening an amazing collection of 300 individuals from across the country and across the ocean stood, played, ran, talked and sang in the yard in the last light of day awaiting dinner. In the vernacular of the day, it was, 'Totally awesome!'

The big room was filled to the gills that night as we had our first big meeting and people tried to understand the mechanics of living together and sharing space for 5 days. Ward Lawrence, father and volunteer coordinator of the kitchen, did an amazing job of feeding everyone and coping with the unexpected—150 more people than anticipated. We made lots of late night and early morning store trips, sometimes cleaning the shelves of a particular item! The dumpster bulged, the rooms overflowed with sleeping bags, the bathrooms barely kept going till Sunday.

Our rewards for this undertaking were the countless smiles, infectious enthusiasm and positive attitudes that were maintained throughout the week, especially from kids who were better represented at this conference than at any other! We hope this trend grows and grows! Good luck, John Boston!

Terry was a teacher at Upattinas School, I believe. Rosalie didn't record his last name, alas!

REGIONAL CONFERENCES—

NERC (Northeastern Regional Conference):

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS CONFERENCE AT NEW SALEM ACADEMY (1985)

by Daniel Botkin

Over a hundred students, teachers and administrators, including representatives from as far away as Maine and Pennsylvania converged on the Morgan Memorial Camp in South Athol, over the weekend of May 9-12 to attend a gathering of the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools (N.C.A.C.S.). The conference was organized and hosted by New Salem Academy students and staff.

The semi-annual conference was converted by New Salem Academy into a 'networking social', featuring a variety of scholarly as well as recreational activities. Staff and students from several schools discussed the problems of funding and maintaining alternative schools. Other folks collaborated on humorous songs and skits depicting life at their schools. Others worked on a huge mural, exchanged songs, swam and enjoyed competitive athletics. An auction, a video documentary on Central America, elegant food and a talent show rounded out the eclectic schedule. Jessica Cavanaugh's forthright and beautiful rendition of 'Living the Life of a Nine Year Old' stunned the talent show audience and left even the jaded and cynical with mouths gaping.

Friend, neighbor and adjunct faculty member, Jimi Two Feathers arrived unexpectedly on the scene to stage one of his epic dance parties on Saturday night. Needless to say, the foot-stomping and twirling went on into the wee hours.

All of the schools also helped to scrape and paint a large camp building by which New Salem Academy bartered part of the camp rental fee. In all, the regional conference was a great success, and most everyone left feeling inspired and energized by the fine company. For more information about the Alternative School Coalition or New Salem Academy please call (617) 544-3822.

Daniel Botkin was a Spanish teacher at New Salem Academy.

NERC CONFERENCE AT UPATTINAS
by Rena Fielding

I just came home after a week of conferences of the Northeast Regional Conference and the NCACS. I work at Upattinas where the conferences were held this year and the 13 or 14 miles I drive to school each day seemed like a thousand tonight as I came home. The effect of spending this week in our school transformed by the presence of about 300 teachers and students and parents in the coalition has been stunning to me. I have a sense of having been present at a great moment in history, the stuff of dreams or something inscrutable like that. I have looked closely at myself and my values and I have improvements to make. I could see the same thing happening in other people, so that many of us will probably see changes in ourselves after this conference. It was like another world.

I was encouraged to see that our members are so magnificent that we make a real difference in the world even with only 300 of us. Larger numbers, more alternative schools could really change things in the world. This conference gave me every hope for a future in the world. We must not underestimate the power of even a few people who act like people toward each other. I feel a great kinship with all the people who came to Upattinas in April from schools in other places. I want them to know how strong my support for them is and how strong a bond was confirmed with the participants in this conference. I personally was honored to be able to help with it and I have come away inspired. How good we are together!

Rena Fielding was a teacher and parent at Upattinas School in Glenmoore, Pa.

Reading these account whets my appetite for more such. If anyone has additional information on other conferences, I'd love to publish them!

THE SCHOOL NOTEBOOK:

This is a new series for *ΣΚΟΛΕ* entitled:

Pages From School Notebooks

It will feature stories, poems, articles, drawings by students, as well as by teachers about their school experiences, plus the pieces sent in to us by home schoolers and/or their parents.

If your reaction is to ask why you call this a new feature, when in reality you have been publishing these things regularly ever since 1985, the answer is, well, sure but not as a separate conscious category! Spring cleaning impulse? Sumpin'.

Love, M.

Pages From School Notebooks*

*P.S. The truth is I just got me 120 megs of memory and now I can run Hypercard, which has all sorts of great graphics 'n stuff!

Arthur Morgan School
1901 Hannah Branch Rd.
Burnsville, NC 28714

Dear Ms. Leue,

I am 14 years old. I wrote 'The Undertow' in English class last year when I was 13. My English teacher Marcy, had everyone in my class come up with a main character for our stories. We made up everything about them—their favorite food, what they looked like, what their background was and their personality—and from that we wrote our stories.

I wrote 'Beyond My Sandy Toes' this year in English class during free writing.

—Amelia Rose Brommer

Dear Amelia,

Thanks for the stories. I liked them. I hope you don't mind waiting for winter to see the second one in print. Keep it up!

Thanks for thinking of *ΣΚΟΛΕ*.

Best,

Mary
Mary Leue, editor

THE UNDERTOW

by Amelia Brommer

(Arthur Morgan School Student)

Teo walks stiffly across the dilapidated playing field. Her stomach aches from the three punches she just received from Nathaniel, a clean-cut brat with a snotty nose and warts on his knees. She ignores the stuffy teacher walking next to her trying in vain to make her come back to school. Why don't they understand that she won't, that it' s the last straw? Why don't they understand her? She stops, turns slowly around, and stares at him with big, sad, hazel eyes, giving him a look that means, 'Go away. Crawl back to your small office with no windows.' He is now saying something, but it's too late. Teo has slipped into her peaceful world and Josh is already waiting for her.

When she emerges from her world, she's sitting on her bed next to her foster mother, Jeannie, who is patting her hand and whispering soft, stupid, mothering things like, 'It's all right honey, you' re OK, now wake up.' Teo lifts her face to look at Jeannie. She looks a little sad and Teo wonders what she's thinking of.

Jeannie seems to sense this silent question and answers, 'You're moving, Teo. We can't keep you. Miss Cringe called and said you are moving to New York to live with a nice family, the Robinsons.'

Teo for some reason isn't surprised. She's lived with Jeannie longer than she' s lived with any of the other families, and besides, she doesn't like Dallas anyway. It is too hot. She looks at Jeannie again and notices that she's talking to her.

'You' re leaving tomorrow, so start packing and I will make some cookies for your flight to New York. Did I tell you it' s New York City? Won' t that be fun?'

And with that she disappears into the kitchen. Teo doesn't really like Jeannie. She talks to her as if she doesn't understand, but she does, so that's Jeannie's problem. Teo walks halfheartedly across the floor to her closet to get her suitcase, the one she' s had for years.

Ever since she can remember, she's lived with different people like a stray dog. She was abandoned when she was about one. An old man found her and took her to live with Miss Cringe until arrangements could be made for her to start her life as a foster child. Life. Life. ... Teo ponders over the word for awhile and then laughs as she remembers that she has no life, and that's why her parents threw her away, gave her up, left her to find a life of her own because it sure as hell wasn't going to come to her, and they didn't want the responsibility of a girl with no life. Not a lot of people want responsibility for her. In fact, no one does, and the only place she feels at home is in her world.

Her world is a place where everyone and everything accepts people and things the way they are and don't try to change them. It is a place that accepts slightly, or maybe very, dreamy kids who have nowhere to turn to except a place that comes from their heads.

Teo doesn't think this place is made up by her; she knows it' s real and she will go there even if it takes all she' s got—even if it kills her. Teo sits still, thinking about the word "kill". To be killed is to die, and to die you must have a life, and she doesn't have a life, so does that mean she' s invincible? Maybe. ... maybe not. Who knows? Maybe her world does, or Josh.

Josh is Teo's only friend. He lives in her world. He' s tall and nice, but most important, he understands her. He means everything to her, and without him she knows she would be lost.

Teo stands and looks from her neatly packed suitcase to her old mirror. The paint is peeling on the frame, and its roughness casts shadows on her thin reflection. She looks at herself, studies every detail—her big, sad, hazel eyes, her slightly turned-up nose, her doll-like lips, her soft cheeks, her funny ears, her beauty mark above her left eye, and her short, auburn hair framing her face like the peeling paint frames the mirror.

Teo sighs and flops on her bed. When she wakes up she'll go to live in New York. She won't make any promises this move. It hurts too much when she breaks them.

When Teo awakens she's still fully dressed in her dark brown sweat shorts and forest green t-shirt. She doesn't bother to brush her hair and goes straight into the kitchen. Jeannie is standing over the stove scrambling eggs. She senses Teo's presence (even though Teo doesn't make a sound) and turns to face her. Jeannie doesn't look sad, but Teo isn't surprised. "She's probably happy I'm going to be out of the house," Teo thinks sourly. Teo doesn't eat much breakfast. She doesn't usually eat much at all, just enough to keep from fainting.

The morning moved by slowly without much talking and it was almost 1:00 p.m. when Miss Cringe came to pick her up. Teo knew Miss Cringe' s face well; it had been in and out of her life since the old man had brought Teo to her. Deeply creased with wrinkles and depression, it was not a happy face, and not exactly a welcome face to Teo. It meant moving, leaving and having to start a new life somewhere else—well, not exactly a life, for she had none, but a new something.

The good-bye to Jeannie wasn't spectacular. Teo didn't cry because she never does, and Jeannie cried a little, but Teo was sure she had been chopping onion so that didn't count.

When they reached the airport it was almost 2:00, so they had to run wildly to catch the plane. Miss Cringe didn't usually accompany Teo on plane rides, but since it was to New York City (a very dangerous place in Miss Cringe's opinion), and since Teo knew nothing about where she was going, Miss Cringe decided "it would be best."

The plane stunk, the food was horrible, and all the stewardesses had fake smiles. Other than that, the flight was fine. Miss Cringe explained to Teo that she would be living in the suburbs of New York with Miss Robinson and her 14-year-old boy, Joey. It didn't sound too bad, but Teo was a little mad that there was a child because they always made jokes about her and teased her. Also, she wasn't so thrilled about living in suburbia la la land. Kids like Nathaniel lived there; they were always stuck up, in Teo's mind.

Miss Robinson and Joey were waiting for them when they arrived in New York. They looked clean and surprisingly nice. Somehow Joey looked very nice. Teo had never had this feeling before in her life. She actually thought someone was nice, or looked it. She was so happy that she smiled. It was the first time Miss Cringe had ever seen Teo smile and it lightened her spirits incredibly.

On the ride "home," Teo said nothing. She just looked at Joey. He was about 5'10", sort of thin, and had sandy-blonde hair and green eyes. She almost laughed at him for he reminded her of a big puppy, always tripping over things. He seemed withdrawn from the world, like herself, but he talked and laughed—things Teo didn't often do. With this feeling of happiness and understanding came another feeling that wasn't so welcome. This was shyness, and with shyness came embarrassment.

Teo liked living with the Robinsons more than anyone she had lived with before. Miss Robinson didn't talk much, but it was different than the talkless people before her. They were intimidated by her strange ways and ignored her, but since Miss Robinson had Joey, she was used to silence and it was a much more natural feeling. She spent long, leisurely days being silent and talking to Josh in her world.

It was one of these days when she had her first talk with Joey. She was on the verandah sipping lemonade and watching the snooty neighbors playing croquet. She was in the middle of thinking how dumb grown-ups were, and that they were just big kids with bigger egos, when she heard his voice and he said, "Hi," but it sounded like a choir of angels, and it surprised Teo so much she spilled her lemonade all over her, and this made her face flush red with her new enemy, embarrassment.

After that short, embarrassing talk came longer and not so shy ones. At first Teo was hesitant, for she had never trusted anyone before, and learning to trust Joey was very hard at first, but soon it came easily, especially after she learned that he had a world that was the same as her own.

She found this out one day when they were taking a walk together around a big playing field. They had stopped to watch some small children playing baseball. It was a pretty bad game. All the coaches were yelling and some of the kids had begun to cry. Teo was beginning to lose interest when Joey said it, said the words that would make them become friends, break all of the barriers and let Teo trust someone. The words were "dumb humans". It might sound dull to you, but it meant everything to Teo. They were the most lovely words, for they were not only spoken with power, but they were spoken in the secret tongue of her world.

With this recognition of speech came a recognition of looks. She had thought before that Joey resembled Josh, but now she knew. She knew Joey *was* Josh. How could she have been so stupid not to notice before? But she was so happy that Josh had finally come for her that she laughed. It was the first time she had ever laughed on earth. It sounded strange and foreign, but it felt good, and it took the chains that bound her to depression off for awhile, long enough for her to lift her downcast face and get a wonderful look into Josh's beautiful clear-green eyes.

That look meant more than any words that they could speak. In that look came the knowledge that Josh had come to take Teo home to their world, the world that was untouched by humans and their material things, untouched by conflict and anger. In a way their world was too good. Before, Teo knew she didn't have enough strength to reach it, but with the help of Josh she could do it. With him she could face everything.

There was a change at the Robinson's after that day. The house was often filled with laughter and shouts of children that had been freed from solitude. Even though Teo talked and laughed with Josh, she still wouldn't speak much with anyone else. When Josh was gone she would step back into her old sad self.

It was now the end of July. Soon Teo and Josh would have to go back to school, something they both strongly disliked. Josh didn't like it because too many people made him more clumsy and nervous. For Teo it wasn't so much all the people (even though they didn't help). It was that she had a fierce temper and would get into bad fist fights with kids who challenged her strange ways. She was quite strong for her weight and age, but still she didn't always win. She often got bad cuts and bruises, but one thing she would never do was cry. There was something in her pride that wouldn't allow it.

She didn't like fights and she didn't like school, so that made Josh and her start planning for the runaway sooner. They knew they couldn't face school again. They had to go to their world for real now, not just in their heads—that didn't work well anymore. They both wanted to actually feel the long, silky grass and let the cool breezes of their paradise kiss their sad faces and go deep into their minds, lifting their depression and giving them happiness, and maybe if they were lucky enough, a life.

WHERE ARE WITCHES?

by Madeline Leue

Where are the witches?
Under the mountains.
Under rocks and
   into fountains.
Witches fly very high on their brooms.
No one can see them in their rooms.

Madeline Leue, one of my granddaughters, is five years old.

THE BRAVE COWS

by Gabrielle Becker

There once was a cow named Nicky who had two baby calves. She lived in Trantow by the butter factory. She made butter milk. But at present, she had her own stable for herself and her calves.

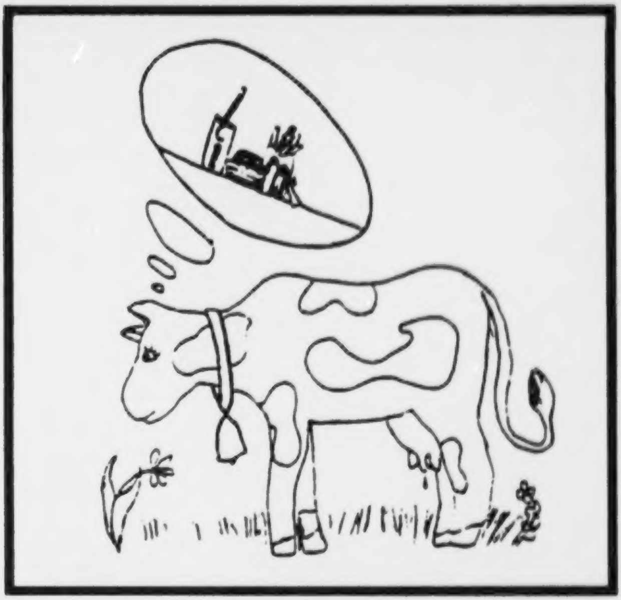
When she was thinking one day, she remembered what Jan (her friend cow) had said about Teena and Bobby (her two baby calves) being brought to a hamburger farm in Green Island. Was it really true about her children being made into a two ninety-nine hamburger and fries?

She also was thinking about the broken board in the fence in the old grazing field. Maybe, just maybe, she could take them away and be free. Free from everything. But what was she thinking? It was ridiculous. Even if she wanted to, it would be too hard to get out unnoticed. Oh, much too hard with Bobby and Teena and all.

But when she thought of them being a hamburger, she couldn't bear it any more. She reared her back legs into the air (which was only 1 or 2 inches) stomping and blowing air out of her nose. After she calmed down, she thought out her plan. She thought maybe in the morning, when the guys take her out to the new field, she could wander into the old one when no one was paying any attention (no one ever paid attention, so it was easy).

Now the hard part was getting the loose board off. She pushed and pulled until it fell. First, Nicky went through. Then Teena and Bobby followed right behind. They walked for maybe a half an hour. Then they stopped for an hour when the sun was too hot. It was very different than Nicky thought it would be. No nice green grass and all these bugs. Ooow, but look. She saw a nice bog with clean water. That's where they stayed for a while. They started up again in the morning.

Meanwhile, there was a family about 100 miles away. A very poor family. Too poor to have bagels on Friday or even have their own beds. Everyone shared a bed of hay. But no one complained because they all knew that Father was doing the best he could to make money and Mama was stretching the money as far as she could. They all were saving for a cow. 'One day,' Mama would say, 'One day we will have a cow and we can make cakes and bread and butter. And cow's milk has the most sweet taste,' she told them.



There were five children in the family: three boys and two girls. Their names were Jessica the baby and little Loren. Then there were Ben and Joseph and Derrick, the oldest of all. He was fifteen already. He had a job making hats to sell in the city where Derrick and Daddy go every year. "It is so fun when they go," said Joseph. "Because Daddy always brings presents back for us. Remember the time he got us red pencils. It was so fun."

That night little Loren wished on a star. She said, "Please God. Will you bring us a cow. Because Mama says she will bake a cake with cow's milk. If we get a cow, you can have a piece of Mama's cake, I promise. Amen."

Also that night, Nicky prayed on a star because she didn't know about wishing. She said, "O, God will you give me a home. Please, for me and my babies. They aren't tough enough for the wild. Ahbulls."

In the morning, it poured forever. Bobby and Teena had mud up to their tummies and Nicky had mud on her legs. They ate grubs and bushes for breakfast. Teena said it didn't taste good and Bobby agreed. The rain stopped around 3 p.m. and it grew very cold compared to what Nicky and Bobby and Teena were used to. They took about a half an hour to find some dry place to be and to dry off and get warm. They went on like that for a week and now you could see their ribs.

One day when it was especially cold. Bobby slipped on a rock because it was raining. He sprained his hoof and slowed everyone down. Nicky was getting wired because she had not seen any sign of civilization since they left the factory. Was there anything else? Was the factory the only place where humans lived? she asked herself.

Teena would say over and over, "Mama. Mama, I know there are other humans. Jan told me. Jan told me. She did. She did. I know because Jan told me. Jan told me there were other people. Other people, Jan said there were. She did."

Nicky would have killed Jan if they were back at the milk factory. Every day Bobby's foot got more and more infected. More painful too. Bobby would wail the most loud and sad sound.

They had been away 18 days now when they saw a small house with kids running around. Teena started to run toward the house. When the kids spotted her, they started to yell and scream with joy. "Oh Mama and Daddy," Joseph yelled, "We have got our cows."

That night Loren took her piece of cake and put it outside for God to have. It was gone in the morning. She was so happy she didn't know Nicky ate the cake.

The End

This story, written by Gabrielle Bennett Becker, first appeared in the* Wilbur Street Gazette and Weekly Post Dispatch. *Our thanks to its editor, Larry Becker, for permission to reprint Gaby's story. Gaby is thirteen years old.

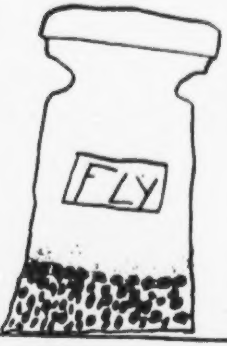
First Chanukah for young Paul, and a horizontal horseback ridefrom a friend

Free School scenes shot by Connie Frisbee-Houde

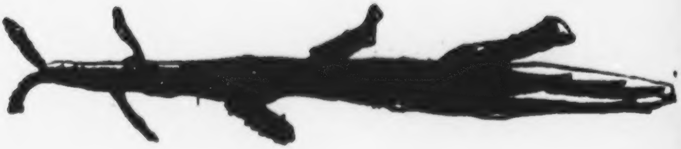
Human catchers uncle

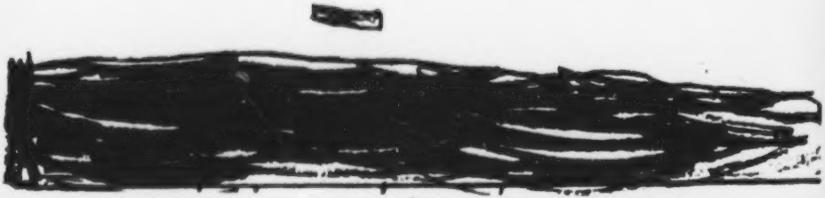
written by Ian
Illustrated by Caleb Ward

for Ambjörn



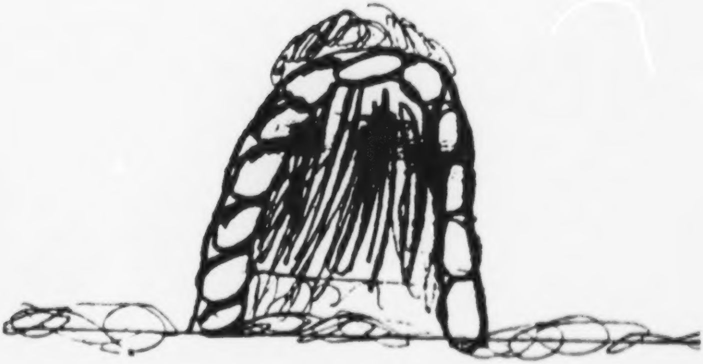
Once upon a
time about the
same time as Human
catcher, the sort-of
fisher man went
frogging at his lake





Suddenly he saw a gold piece floating in the air. He started to wade into the water. He couldn't move!

He Looked down
at a bullfrog
hanging onto
his leg. Then
the bullfrog let
go and leapd



at the fisherman: leg. It bent and the frog dragged him away. The next thing he realized he was in a cave. It Looked Like the fishes cave. The same things happen and he never froged again.

Ian is 7.
He is in 1st grade, he says you should read Human catcher first.

November 14, 1993

ΣΚΟΛΕ, Mary Leue
20 Elm St.
Albany, NY 12202

Jerry Mintz, Director of The *Alternative Education Resource Organization* suggested that I submit this to you.

As an innovative and eager teacher with a love for learning and children, I recently had an opportunity to create and implement an in-depth study in my first grade classroom. This study had a surprising outcome.

With the belief that active learning is the best teaching tool, I created and used a unit of study with the objective 'don't judge a book by its cover.' I have witnessed incredible growth and learning well beyond what is usually seen in six and seven year-olds. This study encompassed a five month span.

The non-fiction account of an active, on-going lesson closely follows a first grade class of 27 in their search for the courage: to stand up to peer pressure, teasing and strange looks in order to guide, teach, and protect their best friend, Madalyne, who is different from all the students in the school. Madalyne has a number of unusual traits and disabilities with which she needs special help and understanding.

As you see in the attached article, my classroom is unique. The manuscript is a refreshing, positive look inside a motivated class, as well as a new twist on learning about differences. This story demonstrates how young children learn and build their personalities.

The first two parts of the manuscript, 'For the Love of Madalyne,' are enclosed. I have written a series of articles related to my unique classroom experience. These can be broken into a series of articles, or published as one book, whichever fits your format. Your readers will enjoy this surprising experience, and many teachers may want to replicate it in their own classrooms.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,
Holly M. Engel
3901 SW Scherer Rd.
Lee's Summit, MO 64082
(816) 765-8189

MADALYNE

by Holly Engel

It was the middle of the 1992-1993 school year at Prairie View Elementary School when I first saw her. I knew it would be difficult for her to be accepted by her peers. She was very short, about five inches shorter than the others. Her eyes were crossed and her eyebrows were too thin. It was obvious that her dress was old from the several. patches. Her nose was so incredible. It was very long, with a wart on the end. She had a horrible profile because of the nose. Her hair was long and stringy. She had freckles, Also, I soon found out that she had eleven toes—six on one foot.

When I learned that I was going to get a special needs student, I did the usual things that need to be done to have a new student added., I had a special small desk brought in the room and a tall chair to accompany it. I made out her name tag and wrote her name in my attendance book.

The Monday that she arrived was a cold and windy day. Madalyne was the first one there, beating the morning bell by almost ten minutes. I helped her put her supplies away and gave her a crayon so she could start her morning work. But, she did not get far before the bell rang and the other students entered the room.

I went to the chalk board and began writing the date and some notes for the students to read. While my back was to the class, I suddenly heard a lot of laughter. I heard someone yell, "Miss Engel, what is she doing here?"

I turned to see six or seven children surrounding Madalyne. One was pulling her hair. One was pinching her nose. The rest were laughing and pointing. I was shocked to see this. "What are you doing to Madalyne? You leave her along! She is a new friend in our class." I was very upset and went to see if Madalyne was all right. The other students sat down and began their morning work, buzzing about the new, odd student.

After the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem, I decided it was time to introduce Madalyne formally to the class. She had been stared at and whispered about for long enough.

I rang my brass apple bell to get the attention of the class. As I stood behind Madalyne's chair with my hands on her shoulders, the class grew very quiet. The first graders were very still.

I cleared my throat. 'We have a new friend. This is Madalyne Wimple. She will need a lot of help getting used to our school and classroom. I hope you all will be a good friend to her.' I heard a few kids snicker.

Over the next months, the class helped Madalyne in many ways. Sometimes she fell out of her chair. A child would carefully pick her up and put her back in the chair. Madalyne would fall asleep in class, too! This stunned the class. Of course, they would look towards me for a reaction. I would calmly ask someone to wake her up. The child did so very gently. The child would give Madalyne her pencil and show her where we were on the page.

Madalyne was assimilated into our class easily. The counselors and other teachers would go out of their way to greet Madalyne. Some would even have to explain to wondering visitors that Madalyne 'was part of Miss Engel's class.'

Since we did a lot of cooperative learning and buddy work, Madalyne often was chosen as a buddy. It was both intriguing and touching to see the first graders so hard at work with a buddy that seemingly had so little to offer to the task. After all, she was a 'special needs' student and needed a lot of help with even sitting at her desk. But the stories that she and her buddy wrote would bring tears to my eyes.

When a child chose Madalyne to partner work, that child felt free to be creative, be different from the way the class viewed him/her. The class clown became a serious adventure writer with Madalyne's help. The shy, quiet child was able to read her and Madalyne's story in front of an audience with Madalyne's help. A boy who was hyperactive became subdued, somber and physically still while working with Madalyne.

Difficult times at home often plague any classroom in this day and age. Some children act disrespectful, rude, and have deviant behavior as a result of this. Some young children become painfully shy and quiet. These children do not understand the fighting, financial problems, divorce, and even drug, alcohol and even physical abuse that may plague an unstable home. To live in and deal with this is an awful lot to ask a child of six or seven. Kids know that things are not calm at home. They know it does not feel good and safe at home. But to verbally express these thoughts and feelings is almost an impossible thing.

I was surprised at the times when Madalyne would be dearest to a child. The neediest, most stressed child would often read to Madalyne, buddy work with her, help her to our special class, and make sure she was sitting up straight in her chair. As I walked around the classroom to check on-task behavior and progress on a project, I noticed that the upset child would be holding Madalyne's hand. Some would even carry Madalyne to my desk and softly say, "Madalyne is sad. She is worried that her parents are going to get a divorce." Or a child would tell me that Madalyne is tired because she had to dance last night from 7:00 to 10:00. Madalyne would also feel sad that her mom was going out of town on business.

Madalyne also had physical needs. She would need to go to the bathroom, according to her helper. Sometimes her shoes were too small and she would need to take them off. Sometimes she might just need a big hug from me, along with her friend.

It was surprising to be that the children used Madalyne as a voice to express the hurtful and scary parts of their lives. At one time or another, each child in my class expressed their feelings through Madalyne. Without embarrassment, children told me of Madalyne's weekend fights with her brother and sister and how she hates her daycare center.

I felt extremely lucky that my small class had the ability to express the hurt they felt. Many people who had a difficult childhood grow up to be difficult adults. Usually, adults with problems need a doctor to help them sift back through the past in order to remember and express hard times when they were very young.

I think my class, with Madalyne's help, will be healthier and happier as they grow. They were able to use Madalyne's "tough times at home" to cleanse themselves of the guilt, fear, and pain associated with growing up in the midst of an unstable home, and an ever-changing world.

One day, during her first week at school, Madalyne was extremely late. We were all very concerned. Was she lost? Was she sick? Did anyone see her in the cafeteria getting breakfast? The class was so concerned that I promised I would call Mrs. Wimple at recess to solve the mystery.

The students were so concerned about Madalyne that the first lesson was not a big success. Everyone stared at the door and at Madalyne's seat. I was working along through my lesson plan about Clifford, the Big Red Dog when there was a knock on the door. All of the boys' and girls' eyes widened with excitement. The door slowly opened. In came Madalyne and Mrs. McKee, our neighbor across the hall.

"Madalyne! Where have you been?" asked one student. Another student ran over to help Madalyne to her seat.

Expressions of great relief were written across every small face in my class.

Mrs. McKee explained that Madalyne had gotten lost and one of her students helped Madalyne back to the classroom.

I asked the kids to describe how Madalyne looks. At first, they did not want to talk about it. I gently prodded. "What about her dress?" I asked.

"It is a pretty color of purple," answered a student.

"What about her nose?" I asked. The room was silent. "Do you like her hair? Would anyone in here want to have Madalyne's hair?" Several kids squirmed. No one made eye contact with me.

I tried again at a different angle. "Now really, is she that pretty? Personally, I think her feet are too big." I wrote my idea about Madalyne on the chart paper I had on the chalk board. I solicited new ideas.

"Well, her nose is kind of big. But that makes it easier to smell things with," came the first reply.

"Her eyes are crossed, but I think that glasses would fix that."

"Her dress has patches, but it is a pretty color."

Many hands were in the air now. The boys and girls gave words or sentences to describe Madalyne's physical appearance. Curiously, each item about her ugly physique was defended.

Soon our chart was full. I asked the kids why it was so hard to fill the chart paper. They explained to me that Madalyne was a good friend, she liked to be read to, she smiles all the time, and she is nice. One by one came the exact responses I had desired: descriptions of Madalyne's personality and character that made her so lovable.

In closing the lesson, I explained that in life, there are many people that may look odd or different. There are many people who have various beliefs and ways of life. I instructed the children to remember Madalyne when they meet these people. Think about how ugly Madalyne was on the outside, and how wonderful she is on the inside.

Madalyne was invited back into the room, and we proceeded with our day. Madalyne was more popular than ever. There was no fear of peer pressure or teasing that often follows an oddball student. The rest of the school unfortunately did not know Madalyne. They did not know how sweet she was and what a wonderful friend she was.

The students in my class would have to endure a lot of teasing, laughing, hurtful comments about Madalyne. She was ugly, funny-looking, dirty, poor. But my students were very strong, and they stood up to the big kids who laughed and pointed. My kids would hug Madalyne tighter to their chest. Some even plugged her ears as rude comments were thrown our direction.

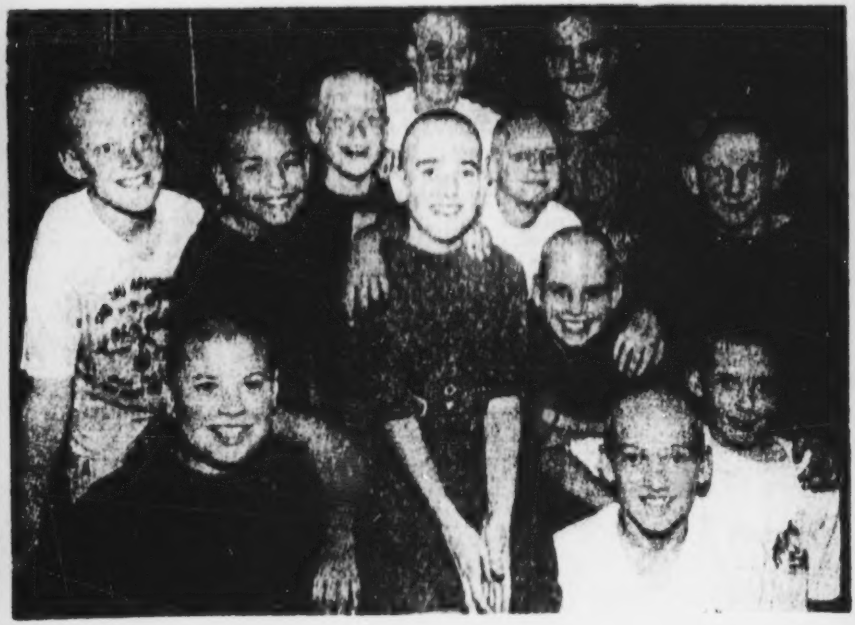
You see, Madalyne was not only a very special student with a lot of needs, she was a doll. A doll that I had specially made for a lesson on 'don't judge a book by its cover.' This lesson grew and bloomed into an incredible five months. I learned about how children think and act. The students learned about vicious bullies.

We all learned about what love really is. For the love we had for Madalyne was so strong, it inspired us all. Madalyne was definitely the most popular girl in the class.

This is to pass on some of that love. This is the story of Madalyne, the most popular girl in the class.

Thus, the time had come for some lessons that could not be learned from a book. These lessons were on life, friends, honesty, trust, and right versus wrong.

I particularly love this article because it is pure and true, like Holly herself, and also because it comes right out of a public school teacher's classroom, out of her own warm heart and imagination! A sad note on which to end this human success story comes from a phone call from Holly herself, telling me that her contract has not been renewed as of the end of this school year! She will, however continue to send us articles.



IAN O'GORMAN, center, who is undergoing chemotherapy for cancer, is surrounded by his fifth-grade class-mates in Oceanside, Calif., who shaved their heads as a show of support.

BALDNESS AS A BUDDY SYSTEM

by Brigitte Greenberg, Associated Press

- Teacher, 13 fifth-graders show support for classmate with cancer
- Sharing his fight help them to understand the disease

OCEANSIDE, Calif.—In Mr. Alter's fifth-grade class, it's impossible to tell which boy is undergoing chemotherapy. Nearly all the boys are bald. Thirteen of them shaved their heads so a sick buddy wouldn't feel out of place.

'If everybody has their head shaved, sometimes people don't know who's who. They don't know who has cancer, and who just shaved their head,' said 11-year-old Scott Sebelius, one of the baldies at Lake Elementary School.

For the record, Ian O'Gorman is the sick one.

Doctors recently removed a malignant tumor from his small intestine, and a week ago he started chemotherapy to treat the disease, called lymphoma. Besides surgery, I had tubes up my nose. I had butterflies in my stomach,' said Ian, who'll have eight more weeks of chemotherapy in an effort to keep the cancer from returning.

Ian decided to get his head shaved before all his hair fell out in clumps because of the chemotherapy. To his surprise, his friends wanted to join him—in a move reminiscent of the 1992 U.S. Olympic volleyball players, who shaved their heads in a show of solidarity with a bald teammate.

'The last thing he would want is to not fit in, to be made fun of; so we just wanted to make him feel better and not left out,' said 10-year-old Kyle Hanslik.

Kyle started talking to other boys about the idea, and then one of their parents started a list. Last week, they all went to the barber shop together.

'It's hard to put words to,' said Ian's father, Shawn, choking back tears as he talked about the boys. It's very emotional to think about kids like that who would come together, to have them do such a thing to support Ian.'

The boys' teacher, Jim Alter, was so inspired that he, too, shaved his head.

'You're showing the world and the country what kids can do. People think kids are going downhill. This is the best,' Alter said.

He added that Ian's illness has proved to be one of the important lessons of his class. 'We've had some lessons on cancer cells, different kinds of cancer and of course, chemotherapy,' said Alter, who calls the boys his little bald eagles.'

Ian doesn't]like to talk about the cancer much or the pain, but his friends know what's happened.

'I've been there with him in the hospital, and I've seen what he's been through, all the needles, all the throwing up, how he couldn't walk and everything. It's like torture,' said Kyle, who likes to ride bicycles with Ian after class.

Ian left the hospital March 2, and doctors told his mother, Heather O'Gorman, that 70 to 90 percent of children with the same disease at this stage have achieved long-term survival. Once the doctors are through with the chemotherapy, they will monitor him for another two years for a recurrence. If there's none, doctors would pronounce him cancer-free.

Although Ian has lost 20 pounds and is pale, he is eager to get back to the 'business of 'being an 11-year-old—playing baseball and basketball.

'I think I can start on Monday, he said.

From the **Albany Times-Union** *for March 20, 1994.*

AND SOMETIMES

by Ted Becker

I am sitting next to my
dog and cat and writing
this poem. I love my dog and cat.
My dad gets mad at my
cat sometimes 'cause he pees
on the work telephone
sometimes.
And my mom is reading
Anne of Green
Gables to my sister
Gaby. She's nice.
My dog is biting
his fleas. It makes
a disgusting slurpy
sound and my dad is writing the Wilbur
Street Gazette. Well
I'm tired, so I guess
I'll go to bed.

Ted is eight years old.

MYLES HORTON (1905-90) OF HIGHLANDER
ADULT EDUCATOR AND SOUTHERN ACTIVIST

by Franklin Parker and Betty J. Parker

Introduction

Who was Myles Horton and why is he worth our time? As a leader of social change in the South, Horton was significant because:

—his Highlander Folk School in East Tennessee helped unionize southern textile workers and coal miners in the 1930s and '40s; and helped advance civil rights in the '50s and '60s;

—early black leaders (Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Andrew Young, and others) attended Highlander workshops before the Montgomery, AL bus boycott, lunch-counter sit-ins, student freedom rides and school integration;

—Highlander first popularized 'We Shall Overcome,' the civil rights song; and

—Highlander-initiated Citizenship Schools helped some 100,000 blacks become literate and thus qualified to register to vote.

To critics he was a rabble-rousing 'red,' a 'communist,' a threat to American institutions and traditional values. Huge billboard photos in the South in 1965 were captioned, 'Martin Luther King at a Communist Training School' (Highlander).

He challenged entrenched power and privilege (like India's Gandhi), helped workers form unions and (like labor organizer Saul Alinsky, 1909-72), helped empower dispossessed people (like Brazilian adult educator Paulo Friere), and helped people realize and achieve their legal rights (like consumer advocate Ralph Nader) .

But what in Horton's background and upbringing foretold what he was to become?

Youth

He was born in Savannah, TN July 9, 1905, eldest of four children. His parents, Perry and Elsie Falls Horton, were Tennesseans, Scotch Irish, and poor, although a paternal forebear had received the first land grant (c. 1772) in northeast Tennessee. His parents passed on to Myles their Cumberland Presbyterian Church's Calvinistic values, independent spirit, belief in helping others less fortunate regardless of race, and a respect for education (both parents, with grade school education, having been school teachers).

The Hortons moved from Savannah to Humboldt (near Memphis), where Myles went to high school, and worked summers. Becoming skeptical about religion, he questioned his mother, who advised, 'just love people.' He majored in English literature at Cumberland University, Lebanon, TN, 1924-28, refused to be hazed himself and organized other students to resist hazing. Working in a Humboldt box factory in the summer of 1925 and reading about the Dayton, TN trial on teaching evolution, he supported John T. Scopes to the shock of fellow workers. President of his campus YMCA in his junior year, 1927, he attended a southern YMCA conference on Nashville's Vanderbilt campus and had his first contact with foreign and black students. He resented not being able to take a Chinese girl to a restaurant or enter a public library with a black acquaintance. Then Cumberland University trustee John Emmett Edgerton, a woolen manufacturer and president of the Southern States Industrial Council, lectured the student body against labor unions. Upset, Horton, on impulse, went to the Edgerton textile mill in Lebanon, was dismayed at the unfair practices he saw, and urged the workers to organize. University officials threatened to expel him if he visited the mill again.

Ozone, TN: Summer 1927

In summer vacations, organizing vacation Bible schools for the Presbyterian Church, Horton in the summer of 1927 got his assistants to teach the young people at a small Ozone, East Tennessee church while he invited their parents to discuss their problems. They asked about farming, how to get a textile mill job, how to test wells for typhoid, and other problems. Myles said he'd get experts who knew the answers: a county agent, a health officer, and others. He realized for the first time that he could lead a discussion without knowing all the answers. He sharpened their questions, got them to talk about their own experiences, and found that they already had many answers.

Ozone people liked these discussions, attendance increased, and a woman who liked what he was doing said that she would be willing to turn over her home to him for such programs. Horton, grateful, said he would think about it and would return when he had something to offer. 'O' for Ozone in his later notes stood for the kind of school he wanted to start. The Ozone experience, he later said, was the genesis of Highlander.

Union Theological Seminary: 1929-30

Crisscrossing the state as Tennessee YMCA organizer, Myles found a sympathetic listener in Congregational minister Abram Nightingale, with whom he sometimes boarded. Nightingale encouraged Myles's intent to establish a school, saying: 'You need more learning, more experiences, more contact with freethinkers away from the South'. He encouraged Myles to attend Union Theological Seminary, New York City, and shared Union Seminary ethics professor Harry F. Ward's (1873-1966) book, *On Economic Morality and the Ethic of Jesus*. Ward held that extremes of wealth and poverty were the Achilles' heel of U.S. free enterprise, that the profit motive hindered Christian brotherhood and equality in 'a just and fraternal world.'

As the stock market crashed, businesses failed, and the jobless formed bread lines, Myles at Union met probably the most socially activist academics in the U.S. Seeking a philosophy to guide the school he envisioned, he took theology courses, read widely at Columbia University Library near Union, worked in a Hell's Kitchen ghetto boys' club, visited Greenwich House and Henry Street Settlement House, and helped organize an International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union strike. He went to observe a Marion, NC textile strike; visited Brookwood Labor College, Katonah, NY, which trained labor union leaders (modeled after worker education-oriented Ruskin College, Oxford, England); observed remnants of the utopian Oneida Colony in upstate NY, and the cooperative communities at Rugby and Ruskin, TN and at New Harmony, IN. He sadly noted that these had turned inward and away from active involvement in society. His envisioned school would be loosely structured and adaptable to involve, serve, and help poor people in labor and racial strife, help them find ways to gain dignity, freedom, and justice.

Unconcerned with credits, grades, or a divinity degree, he read the Fabian socialists, John Dewey, George S. Counts, and others. Observing a New York City May Day parade while unwittingly wearing a red sweater, he was rudely awakened to reality when a mounted policeman clouted him for being a 'goddamn Red.'

Most influential was liberal theology professor Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971), a passionate advocate of the social gospel. Niebuhr had come to Union the previous year, 1928, from a small Detroit church. His Christian ethics seminar, which Horton attended, was the basis of his 1932 book, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*. Niebuhr questioned the generally accepted notion of inevitable progress, was sad that the poor were oppressed and exploited by the economic and political system, and headed the Fellowship of Socialist Christians, which wanted progressive churches to ally with labor to achieve fundamental reform. With socialist Norman Thomas, Niebuhr co-founded a journal, *The World Tomorrow*, dedicated to 'a social order based on the religion of Jesus.' Niebuhr saw the reformer's problem as how to achieve equality and justice peacefully; that is, how to nonviolently pit the power of the oppressed against the power of oppressors. Niebuhr's thesis fitted the aim of Horton's southern adult education school—to help downtrodden people find ways to solve their own problems. To Horton, Niebuhr was sympathetic and encouraging.

University of Chicago, 1930-31

Interested now more in sociology than in theology, Horton went to the University of Chicago. He was impressed by sociology professor Robert E. Park's (1864-1944) theory that antagonistic individuals unite when they see they can attain common goals by working together. Through Park, Horton saw that conflict is inevitable; the thing to do is to use conflict creatively to move people away from the *status* quo and toward a better economic, political, social and moral position. Horton was also influenced by Lester F. Ward's *Dynamic Sociology*, which argued that education requires action and that social progress is possible only through dynamic action. He talked with and was encouraged by Jane Addams of Hull House. In the spring of 1931 he met two immigrant Danish Lutheran ministers who, when they heard him describe his school ideas, said that it sounded like the Danish folk school and urged him to visit Denmark.

Reading about Danish folk school history and accomplishments, Horton compiled a pertinent bibliography for the university library. He also read *The Southern Highlander in His Homeland* by John Charles Campbell (1867-1919), written with Mrs. Campbell who in 1925 had established the John C. Campbell Folk School near Brasstown, NC, along Danish folk high school lines. Horton earned enough money for travel to Denmark by returning to New York City as researcher for a professor he had met at the University of Chicago.

Denmark Folk Schools, 1931-32

Visiting Danish folk high schools, Horton appreciated 19th century founder, Bishop N.S.F. Grundtvig's (1783-1872) 'Living Word' sermons, and admired disciple Kristen Kold's folk schools, which had awakened oppressed peasants' patriotism and civic responsibility, helped restore Denmark's economic prosperity, and led to cooperatives and a broader-based democracy. He liked the newer folk high schools for industrial workers and admired their informality, close student-teacher interaction, highly motivated learning, and clear objectives.

Christmas night, 1931, Copenhagen

Unable to sleep on Christmas night, 1931, Horton wrote about his future school: it should be located in the South; have white and black students and teachers working together, give no credits nor exams; face problems, propose solutions and try out those solutions in conflict situations in the students' home communities.

Highlander at Monteagle: November 1, 1932

Horton returned to New York in May 1932, outlined his school plan to Reinhold Niebuhr, who wrote a finance appeal letter for a school in the South to train 'an educated radical labor leadership.' At Niebuhr's suggestion, Horton got his school's first $100 contribution from International YMCA Secretary Sherwood Eddy (1871-1963) and had promise of two Niebuhr graduate students as teachers: one who stayed less than a year, and James A. Dombroski (1897?-1983), son of a Tampa, FL jeweler, who stayed nearly a decade.

Searching for a school site, Horton contacted Will W. Alexander (1884-1956?) of the Commission on Interracial Cooperation, who mentioned Don West, who also wanted to establish a southern Appalachian folk school. West (1906-), a rural north Georgian and Lincoln University (Harrogate, TN) graduate, was, like Horton, campus YMCA president, Bible school organizer in mountain communities, and a Danish folk high school enthusiast. Horton learned that this Vanderbilt Divinity School graduate and Congregational church pastor near Crossville, TN was attending the YMCA's Blue Ridge Assembly, Black Mountain, NC. Horton hitchhiked to North Carolina, met and shared common interests with West and, by one account, learned through the Rev. Abram Nightingale that retired college president Lilian Johnson (1864-1968) wanted her Monteagle, TN farm used for community uplift.

This daughter of a wealthy banking and mercantile family had a Cornell University doctorate in history, had been president of Western State College, Oxford, OH, was a leading southern suffragist and a member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. She had gone to Italy to study cooperatives and returned to spread the idea in the South, working from her house and farm in Summerfield, near Monteagle, Grundy County, TN. Horton and West, with meager financial backing and a small staff, got Lilian Johnson to lease her property for a year and, subject to her satisfaction, perhaps longer. Highlander Folk School, as it was named, opened November 1, 1932. Only eight students enrolled in its first residence term, November 1932-April 1933, a small beginning. But with the Wilder, TN coal mine strike 1932-33, 100 miles north of Monteagle, Horton and Highlander became involved for the first time in mineworker-union conflict.

Wilder, TN Mine Strike, 1932-33

The Wilder strike began in the summer of 1932. Mine owners refused to renew a United Mine Workers (UMW) contract unless union members took a 20% wage cut. Long critical of mine conditions and company store prices (they were paid in scrip redeemable only in company stores), union miners struck, closing the mines to mid-October 1932, when non-union scabs and some union members resumed work under armed guards. Violence flared. The state governor sent in some 200 national guardsmen, whose inexperience, drinking, and partiality to scabs and mine owners hardly kept the peace.

Myles Horton went to Wilder in November 1932, took notes on the strike, ate a meager Thanksgiving dinner with UMW local president Barney Graham and, waiting for a bus the next morning, was arrested, jailed, charged with "coming here and getting information and going back and teaching it." He was released the next morning.

To Horton the strike was a conflict situation from which Highlander students and the miners could learn. He and Highlander students distributed emergency food and clothing. Some strikers thought him a "Red." Others appreciated his and Highlander's help and good intentions. Violence continued.

Horton heard of and told state officials of a plot to kill union president Barney Graham. Horton's warning was ignored.

Graham was shot to death April 30, 1933. Their leader dead, strikers returned to work without a contract and under near starvation conditions. Said Horton, "If I hadn't already been a radical, (Graham's murder) would have made me a radical right then." The strike helped shape Highlander's labor education program, which thereafter examined the roles played in labor conflict by newspapers, churches, the power structure, and other community factors. Wilder also confirmed for Horton what he already knew: the power structure's determination in the 1930's and 40's (omitting the war years) to cripple labor unions. He later saw in the 1950's and 60's the power structure mobilize to stem the tide of racial integration.

Zilphia Mae Johnson (Mrs. Myles Horton): 1935

She was from Paris, Arkansas, attending a two-month Highlander winter session. This privileged daughter of an Arkansas coal mine operator and College of the Ozarks graduate was a talented, classically trained musician. Influenced by radical Presbyterian minister Claude Williams, she wanted to use her musical and dramatic talents to advance labor unions. In this, she clashed with and parted from her father. A friend got her to Highlander to learn about the labor movement. She and Myles fell in love and married March 6, 1935. She then studied about workers' theater at the New Theater School, New York City. At Highlander, she taught drama, play writing, public speaking, wrote and directed plays based on labor strikes, and led square dancing and singing.

Zilphia Horton had a gift for using music, drama and dance to advance labor union concerns and civil rights. She united people, mellowed differences, and lifted spirits. By collecting songs and encouraging Highlander students to collect and sing them, she involved communities around Highlander, helping heal wounds, lessen suspicion, and foster cultural pride. Through Zilphia, Highlander's cultural programs gained national and even international renown when the BBC presented a cultural program from Highlander in March 1937.

She also helped give "We Shall Overcome" national and international renown. Originally an Afro-American folk song, "We Will Overcome" became a Baptist hymn and was sung by union members to maintain picket line morale at a Charleston, SC CIP Food and Tobacco Workers strike. Two women members from that union sang it at Highlander in 1946. Zilphia recognized its emotional appeal, slowed the tempo, added verses and sang it at meetings. Pete Seeger (1919-) learned it from Zilphia in 1947, altered its title to 'We Shall Overcome,' added verses and sang it at 1950s folk song concerts around the country. Folk singer Guy Carawan (1927-), who with his wife Candie worked at Highlander, further refined it, and added the verse, 'We Shall Not Be Moved,' during a police raid on Highlander, the night of July 31, 1959. It was sung at Highlander workshops, at civil rights gatherings from the 1960s and became the freedom song heard round the world.

Zilphia and Myles Horton were married 21 years, had a son and daughter, when she tragically died. Reaching for a glass she thought held water, she drank some carbon tetrachloride, realized her error, induced vomiting and phoned her physician, who assured her that she had remedied the accident. But the poison aggravated a kidney condition discovered at Vanderbilt Hospital, Nashville, where she died of uremic poisoning, April 11, 1956.

Citizenship Schools for Voter Registration: 1957-61

Two South Carolina blacks attended Highlander's August 1954 workshop on 'World Problems, the United Nations, and You,' comparing discrimination in the South with discrimination elsewhere. Esau Jenkins (died 1972), a businessman and community leader from Johns Island, SC, accompanying Septima Poinsette Clark (18981987), a Charleston, SC teacher, was more interested in adult black literacy than in the United Nations. Esau Jenkins wanted his neighbors to learn to read and write and so qualify to register to vote. Highlander's staff hesitated, then busy training black leaders for the school desegregation movement. Jenkins and Clark convinced Horton that Johns Island blacks needed adult literacy classes. These began on Johns Island, spread to other Sea Islands, and then through the South. It was Highlander's most successful training program and significantly increased black voter registration, black political awareness and involvement, and helped elect black mayors, sheriffs and other officials in the 1970s and '80s.

Johns Island, six miles south of Charleston, SC, with a 1954 population of 4,000, is the largest of the Sea Island chain along the South Carolina and Georgia coast. Inhabitants, 67% black (other islands had higher black proportions), lived just above subsistence. Some owned farms and small businesses. Most worked on large truck farms or in Charleston as servants or as factory and shipyard hands. Gullah was their home language, a dialect from their African slave ancestors. Until the WPA built bridges in the 1930s, they went by boat to Charleston. Jenkins, a Johns Island leader, had supplemented his fourth grade education with night classes. Converting his small cotton farm to truck farming, he learned enough Greek to sell produce to Charleston Greek vegetable merchants. He was PTA president, church school superintendent, assistant pastor in his church, and also ran a small bus line to the mainland. During the 45-minute drive, he distributed, explained and discussed the South Carolina state constitution and voting laws, thus encouraging passengers to learn to read and write to pass voter registration literacy tests.

Black islanders were suspicious and white authorities were hostile to outside do-gooders. Myles Horton decided to train potential black island leaders at Highlander and send them back to conduct Citizenship Schools. The schools were thus all-black, local and largely self-taught. Septima Clark sent field reports of progress and problems to Highlander, whose staff were seldom seen and thus avoided adverse newspaper publicity for three years.

Horton deliberately chose a black beautician as the first Citizenship School teacher on January 7, 1957. A black beautician with black customers was not dependent on and hence not intimidated by the white power structure. Her parlor was a community center and she was a natural community leader. Bernice Robinson (1917-), born in Charleston, earned her high school diploma through night school in New York City, where she went to better herself. Returning to Charleston in 1947 to help her ailing parents, she actively advanced race relations through the YWCA and the NAACP and found work only as a self-employed beautician and dressmaker.

Esau Jenkins formed a Progressive Club in order to purchase a building (with a loan from a Highlander grant), sold gasoline outside and groceries inside while citizenship classes were held in the back. Bernice Robinson discarded elementary school teaching materials and child-size school furniture. She taught islanders such practical things as how to write their own names, read and understand a newspaper, fill out mail order and money order forms, and do some arithmetic. The class met two hours a night, two nights a week, for some three months. She tacked up a large UN Declaration of Human Rights poster for all to be able to read and understand by the end of the course.

Citizenship School teaching materials were collected into booklets, distributed in South Carolina, and later revised to fit voter registration requirements in Tennessee and Georgia. Guy Carawan, in Highlander 'singing schools,' improvised lyrics for spirituals and folk songs that urged people to learn to read, write, register and vote. Citizenship Schools spread to

Huntsville, AL and Savannah, GA, 1960-61, straining resources at Highlander, in debt in 1961 and about to be closed by Tennessee authorities. In August 1961, Highlander handed over its Citizenship School programs to the Martin Luther King-led Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Septima Clark, who continued working with Citizenship Schools under SCLC, estimated that between 1954 and 1970 they helped some 100,000 blacks learn to read and write.

Highlander Attacked: 1953-61

As Highlander's civil rights activities increased, so too did segregationist attacks. Fear of communist internal subversion pervaded the U.S., aggravated by Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy's Communists in government charges. Alarmed at the liberal tide, segregationists mobilized state authority and police to try to roll back the effects of the May 1954 Supreme Court *Brown* desegregation decision, the 1955 Montgomery, AL bus boycott, the 1957-56 Little Rock, AR school desegregation crisis, the 1961 black college student lunch-counter sit-ins (begun February 1, 1961, Greensboro, NC) and the 1961 white and black freedom bus riders' challenge of southern segregated facilities (begun May 4, 1961).

Attacks on Highlander were based on Communist conspiracy charges, going back to the 1930s. Paul Crouch told a Chattanooga reporter that while he was Tennessee Communist Party head, 193941, Highlander had 25 Communist Party members. Crouch had been courtmartialed in the U.S. Army, served two years in Alcatraz, and was a known paid informer for red-baiting groups. In the 1954 U.S. Democratic Senatorial campaign, Pat Sutton, running against Senator Estes Kefauver, cited Paul Crouch's testimony that Highlander's Dombroski and Horton were Communists. Sutton lost two-to-one to Kefauver, a friend of Horton's, who avoided mentioning Highlander.

In the spring of 1954, Mississippi Senator James O. Eastland (1904-86), white supremacist planter and Joseph McCarthy imitator, headed the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security, investigating 'subversive' southern liberal organizations, including Highlander. Believing that a well publicized investigation would help his 1954 Senate re-election and convinced that Communists promoted racial equality in order to disrupt and take over the U.S., Eastland tied Highlander to a conspiracy web that included Virginia Durr (Highlander trustee), sister-in-law of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black and wife of Clifford Judkins Durr (1899-1975), New Deal official, Progressive Party Senate candidate in 1948, and an anti-politax activist. The March 1954 hearings, dealing with alleged Communist activities of Highlanders Dombroski, Mrs. Durr, Horton and others, ended in raucous disorder with Horton physically dragged from the committee room.

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) revoked Highlander's tax exempt status three times between 1957 and 1971, restored on appeal each time. Horton believed this harassment was aimed at stopping Highlander's school integration efforts.

In 1954 the Georgia legislature created a Commission on Education designed to resist school desegregation. The Commission used undercover agents to probe Koinonia Farm, Americus, GA which had jointly with Highlander sponsored integrated children's camps in Tennessee in 1956-57. On Labor Day weekend, 1957, as Highlander was celebrating its 25th anniversary, Georgia Commission agents photographed Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Horton and a publicly acknowledged black Communist who, he later admitted, had conspired with the agents to be in the photo. In October 1957 the Georgia Commission published a four-page paper titled "Highlander Folk School: Communist Training School, Monteagle, Tennessee," with photos of Highlander's interracial meetings. The Georgia Commission distributed 250,000 copies, and White Citizens' Councils and the Ku Klux Klan distributed over a million copies by 1959. Southern newspapers, including the *Atlanta Constitution*, published articles on Highlander, labeling it at worst Communist and at best pro-Communist. The photo of Martin Luther King at Highlander was displayed by Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett, printed as a postcard by the John Birch Society, and appeared on 1965 billboards across the South titled, "Martin Luther King at Communist Training School." When Highlander's fire insurance was canceled in 1957-58, Horton suspected that segregationists were using economic pressure against the school.

Several southern state legislatures formed investigating committees during 1957-59 on the causes of racial unrest. Arkansas' committee, headed by its Attorney General, tied Highlander to the Little Rock disturbances. He offered to supply evidence to the Tennessee legislature to help them close Highlander.

On January 26,1959, the Tennessee legislature appointed a committee to investigate Highlander, using evidence collected by the Georgia Commission. The charge was that Highlander was integrated, promoted integration, was subversive, promoted

Communism, allowed free love between the races; that it was not a school approved by state authorities, had no qualified faculty, and awarded no diplomas; that Horton operated Highlander for personal profit, since the trustees had given him his house and 76 acres; and last (after a July 31,1959 police raid on Highlander which found beer and a little whisky), that it sold spirits without a license.

Horton repudiated each charge. Yes, Highlander was always integrated and this was implied in its charter. No, Highlander was not subversive but allowed all points of view to be discussed, disavowing Communism because Communism was authoritarian and against Highlander's spirit of open inquiry. No, Highlander did not condone free love, but in square dancing and folk dancing hands were held and bodies sometimes touched. No, Highlander on principle did not issue diplomas and taught by discussing problems and issues, as did many adult education institutions. Yes, Highlander did give Horton his house and 76 acres in lieu of over 20 years without salary for himself and Zilphia Horton. Yes, beer was kept at Highlander because nearby cafes would not serve racially mixed groups and a money kitty was kept to replenish drinks.

Tennessee authorities found Highlander guilty of selling beer without a license and guilty of questionable financial practices (citing the gift of Horton's house and land). Other charges were dropped. The trial sapped Horton's and other Highlander staffs time and energy, yet their programs continued. Appeals delayed the closing of Highlander at Monteagle until August 1961. By then Horton and legal advisers had obtained a new charter meeting Tennessee regulations. A re-named Highlander Research and Education Center began in Knoxville, 1961-71, and still continues at New Market, near Knoxville.

Highlander in Knoxville, 1961-71 was frequently harassed. The City Council, dominated by wealthy grocer Cas Walker, passed an ordinance that all educational institutions must be approved by the Council. Police came with warrants, which Highlander staff ignored, knowing that such legislation was not retroactive and hence not binding. But the KKK marched in front of the school; there were phone threats and crank calls. Once, in a Maryville, TN restaurant, Horton and a Highlander lawyer were badly beaten while their wives watched. Horton kept on. The lawyer had to close his office and move to another state.

Last Years

Horton retired as educational director in 1971; continued to live and act as consultant at Highlander, traveled to talk about the Highlander idea to adult educators in China, the Philippines, India, Malaysia, New Zealand, Australia, and Nicaragua. He was frequently interviewed, most notably on *Bill Movers' Journal*, 'Adventures of a Radical Hillbilly,' Public Broadcasting System, WGBH, Boston, June 5 and 11, 1981. Still, he remained obscure to the general public, a minor figure except to those who valued him as a fighter over *The Long Haul* (title of his 1990 autobiography, indicating the simmering anger he sublimated by a lifelong fight for justice).

Horton died at Highlander, January 19, 1990.

Conclusion

Horton failed to get a fair contract for Wilder, TN coal miners. He was asked to start a Highlander in New Mexico, which failed, and a Highlander in Chicago, which failed. He later came to see that the Highlander idea fitted third-world conditions and succeeded in Appalachia only because Appalachia, exploited and owned by outside business interests, has third-world characteristics. He did anticipate two major social movements in which Highlander had some success and made a contribution: unionized labor in the 1930s-40s (Highlander trained early southern CIO leaders); and race relations in the 1950s-60s (Highlander trained major black leaders; its Citizenship Schools helped enfranchise many blacks).

At Highlander, private, small, fervently committed and with clear goals, Horton taught adults what ought to be. Public schools, which teach what is and so perpetuate the *status quo*, follow and seldom lead in re-shaping the political, economic and social class systems. In challenging and trying to re-shape those forces, Horton was a social reconstructionist like George S. Counts, who wrote *Dare the School Build a New Social Order?*, Harold Rugg, who wrote social studies textbooks, and Theodore Brameld, defender of a reconstructed education for a reconstructed world. Horton, close to both Counts and Brameld, was a revolutionary reformer who knew that he had not ushered in the secondary American revolution, had not brought full justice and dignity to those denied them. He knew but never condoned that injustice exists in all societies, especially free enterprise ones. But we credit him, honor him, remember him for caring enough to fight for a better world.

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TWO FROM LARRY:

VET/NON-VET

by Larry Becker

Reflections on the Viet Nam war after attending a September '90 weekend workshop* that brought together Viet Nam vets and protesters.

It was clear after attending this workshop that part of me had remained frozen in the year 1969, the year I managed to take an anti-war position and affirmatively state my opinion that the war was unjust. That frozen part had maintained and energized itself with shame, guilt and grief and inhibited my ability to bond with men of my generation, especially the vets, whose presence would trigger those feelings. Typically, I did not want to acknowledge my feelings surrounding Viet Nam, and instead I clung to a moral high ground and feelings of 'cleverness' in avoiding combat. There was definitely a conscious polarizing on my part from the men who fought in that war.

In 1968, I lost my student deferment, dropped out of my freshman year of law school, went to work as a narcotic rehabilitation counselor in a New York City prison, and was reclassified as 1-A. I then drew number 13 in the national draft lottery, and went to and passed the draft physical, took some additional tests for Officers' Candidate School, and went to meet with an officers' board in Utica, New York, where I received some reality testing from the Colonel and two Majors present at the board.

Had I not been so confused prior to that meeting in Utica, I would have already made the choice to go to Canada or have enlisted. Instead, for a while, I seemed to want to let myself drift in to one position or another, and avoid responsibility altogether. However, at the officers' board, after they tested my patriotism and found me below their standards (I was up on the number of Olympic gold medals won by the U.S. in recent games—but was not willing to serve in Viet Nam but, instead, would agree to serve in Korea, the Philippines, Germany, etc.),

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** The Workshop was given by Ed Tick, Ph.D., of Albany, New York, a practicing psychotherapist for 16 years, specializing in the treatment of men's issues, Vietnam veterans' trauma and abuse victims.*

and after having engaged in heated discussions with them which from the outside probably sounded like an awkward attempt of interspecies communications (I obviously did not wish to understand or agree with the commitment to the Army and the loss of choices over my own destiny that they envisioned), we parted company with a mutual 'I never did like your kind' salutation, and I think I grew up a little as well. As an understatement, I remember my Mom asking me what had happened and me telling her that I didn't think they liked me.

Soon after that, a close college friend of mine, a gung-ho ROTC lieutenant, then on the front lines in Viet Nam, began to write letters to me of his experiences there, the death, the despair, and the futility and loss of purpose and senselessness of it all. He told me to avoid Viet Nam if I could, and those letters forged my resolve. I began writing letters to my draft board strongly stating an anti-war position. Months had gone by since my draft physical and my encounter in Utica and although I was still 1-A, no call-up occurred.

The next year (1969) my therapist, whom I had been seeing for six months for depression, offered to write my draft board a letter which he felt would keep me out of the draft. I accepted his offer and shortly received a 1-Y card in the mail. I was then twenty-three and looking forward to my twenty-sixth birthday to become draft-proof. That birthday arrived and the selective service never contacted me again.

My fight against the war was mostly personal. I was not involved in demonstrations, voiced public opposition to the war only if asked, and basically kept a low profile about the war and me. I kept my feelings about those times hidden in my inner shadows and did not really let them out until the workshop. It was obvious that these men, vets and non-vets, were my brothers and that I loved them. That I would be accepted by them for who I was and am was much more difficult for me to let in. I guess it's true that grief and love can heal.

EARTHWATCH:

EDITORIAL FROM THE *WILBUR STREET GAZETTE & WEEKLY POST DISPATCH,* 3/4/94

Snow Job and the Seven Dioxins. Thank G-d for this winter of white fluff on the ground and the canvas it presented for the infamous 'soot' burn. As you all know by now, the Answers incineration plant is shut down. We can all breath a sigh of relief, literally. Aaron Mair, Chris Mercogliano, Ward Stone, The Free School kids, and all the others who spoke up and out and supported each other in this issue deserve credit for their efforts. And thanks to Mayor Jennings, for thinking with his heart as well as his head.

Next, comes the Green Island burn plant. Pretty soon the incinerator proponents will be submitting their (para)site proposals. This project will take a high profile concerted effort to stop, because the Green Island politicos are committed to risk the poisoning of **our** air provided **their** community gets enough bucks for the burn. Albany needs to take the position that no Albany trash will ever find its way to Green Island.

. . .

Reduce-Reuse-Recycle
The Environmental Mantra

Reduce. The trash stream into Albany needs to be slowed down. The massive excess packaging, like Price Chopper's self-indulgent deluxe 'Eat-N-Pollute' tuna crackers mayo plastic knife fork plastic wrapped - 'I like plastic, don't you?' fiasco of convenience dioxins needs to be stopped. Buy in bulk, it's cheaper. Furthermore, we are up to our eye balls in wimpy little containers of who-knows-what. And you know what, those wimpy little containers are difficult to clean out or re-use. Hey, don't stop there. Buy large cans of tuna, a whole human size jar of mayo, and a box of crackers. I know it saves money, but you mean I gotta make my own lunch, at home, in advance? Whew! So much for impulse buying.

Re-use. Did someone say re-use? Then there's the issue of reusing what we have. Those glass jars around the house, you know, those peanut butter jars with the nice large mouths, they're almost as handy as plastic 'Tupper Ware', and you've already bought them and have them in the house. Furthermore, eating out of, and storing food in, clean and very cleanable glass containers seems (and probably actually is) better than eating out of those plastic containers. Then there's buying things like shampoo and oils from food co-ops that have already made purchases in bulk for you. You simply bring your own reusable container in and get a great product for less money, and help the environment at the same time. Hey, what's the catch?

Recycle. What's this doing at the end of the list? Obviously its very important. But if we reduce the ultimate creation of trash and its flow into this world, and if we religiously reuse what we already have created, we will have less to recycle.

Larry Becker is half of a husband-wife legal firm, Becker & Becker, that operates out of their house. Between them, the Beckers cover just about anything that needs good, honest, engaged lawyering. Larry went out to Bismark, North Dakota a couple of years ago to help Bill Kunstler at Leonard Peltier's hearing (one of the AIM—American Indian Movement—leaders, still in the pen!) His article about the trip was in the Winter, 1992 issue.

The Wilbur Street Gazette and Weekly Post Dispatch ***is just one of his creative outlets! It has community poetry, kids' poems and stories (see Gaby' Becker's story in the "School Notebook" section of ΣΚΟΛΕ). It's even beginning to sell at local stores near the school, and I'll bet he'd send you one if you mailed him a dollar! His address is 21 Wilbur St., Albany, NY 12202. Better still, send him a poem, a story, an article!***

EARTHWATCH:

View From The Bridge:

A GLIMMER OF HOPE

by Captain Jacques Yves Cousteau

Rich countries are complaining about an 'economic crisis' and having difficulty honoring the promises they made 20 months ago at the Rio Conference.

Poor countries are having more and more difficulty surviving; they cannot pay their debts but are using a large share of the meager aid money to buy weapons.

Geneticists exercise their prowess to improve the yield per acre of wheat, rice and corn, while battalions of motorized woodcutters deforest the land, handing over millions of acres to rain-washed erosion and desertification.

The relative rarefaction of food resources from agriculture or fishing translates into a rise in prices, thereby depriving the poor of traditional sustenance that they can no longer afford in order to satisfy the demand of rich countries that do not need it.

Nevertheless some progress is being made at the local, provincial and national levels. Foundations and organizations are translating public awareness into pressure on the representatives of political and industrial power and into campaigns for environmental protection or for children s education Businesses and governments are responding better to these appeals today.

On a global scale, anarchy still reigns, while at the national level, tangible progress is achieved laboriously The serious questions, which put in doubt the future of a humanity that is proliferating on a small planet with limited resources, must, like problems of military security, be subjected to an international authority: the Security Council.

In the course of the first meeting of the United Nations High-Level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development last September in New York, Secretary-General Boutros BoutrosGhali recommended that we devote special attention to sustainable social development.

This idea offers reasonable prospects of hope. Social development (including health, shelter, education of women) would cost 10 to 20 times less than the myth of economic development if it were realistic.

I will keep you up to date in your *Calypso Log* of the progress that is achieved. But I wanted, in these days of general anxiety, to give you the most beautiful present for the new year: a glimmer of hope.

Reprinted from* Calypso Log *for February 1994. Merci, mon capitaine! And, reprinted from* Calypso Journal *, April, 1994.

MACHINES FOR KILLING

by Captain Jacques Yves Cousteau

Whether a war is declared or not, people are being killed everywhere, by bombs, by shells, by sniper rifles, by machine guns, whoever and whenever. Today you can count altogether 55 tinderboxes of warfare, like the Middle East, the Sudan, Rwanda, Afghanistan, Armenia, Somalia, many others, and especially, of course, Yugoslavia.

For half a century, we have all lived with the terror created by the existence of two superpowers' arsenals of nuclear bombs and megamissiles. Armageddon did not come to pass, but another form of violence brings with it today the worst processions of paraphernalia: concentration camps, organized rape, the slaughter of children, blind destruction of works of art! For how long? And why?

Pretexts from history have become ridiculous and macabre when, 24 years after Armstrong's lunar landing, a global awareness is spreading and was just underlined by the Rio conference. So? All these religious wars, all these ethnic or cultural, provincial or 'traditional' conflicts that are condemned by public opinion virtually everywhere, all these horrors distilled in driblets, could they have one hidden motivation, always the same: the special interests of a few arms dealers? It is surely possible and perhaps probable.

If it is true that the unrestricted sale of revolvers has more than doubled crime in the United States, why wouldn't the same be true at the scale of conflicts that only in the long run attract the concern of governments? Why wouldn't arms sales, encouraged behind the scenes for economic reasons, provoke and support conflicts that would have been snuffed out by negotiations before such sales?

We were in Yugoslavia, and we lived and filmed the beginning of the tragedy. In Belgrade, a first great people's demonstration, not for war but against war. Then we were chased from the Kopacki Rit park by the first conflict that sprang up between the Serbs and the Croats. And today the Croats are fighting with the Serbs against Bosnia! How long until it is Montenegro's turn?

This dreadful war dragged on at length with no intervention by those same nations that are arming the adversaries, whoever they may be. Nearly two years of universal diplomatic indifference, during which weapons were shipped to everyone by boat, train and truck. Now that the traffickers, official or not, have made their fortune on the heaps of innocent corpses, now we call for the United Nations, NATO, global awareness!

Today, a photo in a newspaper: a Ukrainian soldier guards a Bosnian tank in Sarajevo! Bosnian tanks? Croatian tanks? Since when? A stench emanates from all this. People know quite well that weapons are machines for killing that put murder within the reach of the worst coward in civil wars. It takes a certain kind of courage to attack your enemy armed with a simple cudgel or knife. But any coward can massacre an urchin playing hopscotch 500 meters away by squeezing his index finger on the trigger of his sniper rifle.

As long as a few moral principles remain deep down inside us, we must demand that the sale of weapons be declared a criminal act and punish it as such.

Je voudrais bien que vous pourriez voir le couleur du chapeau du capitaine! Il est un rouge tout à fait pur, comme l âme de lui-même!

TALES FROM THE SELF-HELP MILL

by Barbara Quick

Most literary writers, I have it on good authority, are required to do something else besides write deathless prose in order to keep life and limb together. I myself would have become a waitress—or, better yet, a cocktail waitress—as such a job would have afforded me rich glimpses of life while paying the rent. Unfortunately, I am incapable of carrying even a cup of coffee without sloshing half of it into the saucer, and I cringe to think what I would do to a trayful of martinis and Bloody Marys. So, by default, after I paid a couple of months' rent and went to Safeway twice on the proceeds from my first novel, I found a half-time job as an editor. Not just any sort of editor, mind you. Mine is the exalted title of acquisitions editor for a small company that specializes in the publication of self-help psychology books.

Even though I'm called the acquisitions editor, rather than just plain editor, I do my acquiring only once a week, when I pop into the office, exchange pleasantries with my fellow staffers and wade through the pile of padded envelopes on my desk. For the rest of the week, I stay at home and edit whatever it is that my bosses, based in part on my recommendations, have chosen as a worthy addition to their list of titles.

A word about self-help. It can range from the gauzily spiritual and embarrassingly naive to the sort of no-nonsense, professionally acceptable stuff that my company churns out. Half our sales are to psychologists, who pass these books out to their clients like party favors. The other half are sold to consumers who know a bargain when they see one, and figure that if they can do it themselves for $13.95 plus shipping rather than for $75 an hour once a week for 20 weeks running—well, there's not much of a choice there, really, unless you've just got money to burn.

Anyway, all of our books follow a formula, a basic dogma of 'Change the way you think and you will change the way you feel.' There's a liberal peppering of practical exercises throughout the text: techniques for relaxation, visualization, 'thought stopping,' positive affirmations, logical refutations of negative thinking and other forms of mild self-hypnosis.

After two years at this job, I have the illusion of editing the same book over and over again. Sometimes the author is in top form, simply needing a bit of judicious reshaping and a grammatical prod here and there. At other times it seems that someone has diabolically substituted a badly translated manuscript written by an inebriated sixth grader in Finland for the piece of sparkling prose that was originally acquired.

It is, I suppose, not so different from working for a publisher that turns out romance novels or Westerns except that I have benefited emotionally from my work in the same way that an aerobics instructor benefits physically from hers. Now when my sister-in-law fails to comment on the five-course meal I've slaved over for two days except to tell me that the poached pears were too hard, I simply smile benignly, all the while repeating to myself, 'Her opinion doesn't matter.' It works wonders, and I highly recommend the technique to anyone in possession of an opinionated relative.

You might expect that people who work for such a company would in general be terribly well-adjusted folks, on a first-name basis with all their feelings, assertive rather than aggressive, bursting with self-esteem, equally nurtured and nurturing in their relationships, and free of type-A stress, phobias and anxieties. Think again.

Have you ever noticed that people who work in health food stores are among the sorriest-looking physical specimens you've ever encountered, lank of hair, stoop-shouldered and inevitably suffering from advanced cases of acne? So it is, alas, in the business of self-help—at least if I can generalize from my narrow experience of the field.

> **Think the folks who put out those books are well adjusted? Think again.**

Photo phobia: The bosses are even now beginning construction on a second story for our building, because the office manager and the head of typesetting can't stand working in the same room together. One of the bosses routinely gets so upset during phone calls that he falls out of his chair onto the floor. Two in-house authors of a volume on stress are on the verge of suing each other. Our best-selling book on phobias is lacking an author cover photo because—you guessed it—the author has a phobia about having his picture taken. I routinely get submissions from people claiming that their manuscript has been dictated to them by God, and the medical doctor hired to write a professional overview for one of our books backed out of the deal because we refused to include his theories on past-life stress.

Being only an occasional visitor to the office, I've been able to ward off the infection for the most part. But lately the subject matter of the books themselves has begun to unglue me. For self-help books by necessity must concern themselves with perceived psychological problems: phobias and anxieties, obsessions and compulsions, mania and depression, insomnia, eating disorders, any number of addictions and, for those without the more obvious outward signs, the incessant whining of the wounded inner child. Like those poor sods in medical school who imagine that they have every disease they're learning about, I've come up against the occupational hazard of my burgeoning expertise. I now spend my spare time worrying that I have a latent case of post-traumatic stress disorder, a comatose inner child, a codependent relationship with just about everyone I know and any number of compulsions. And it's a fact that worrying about whether or not you suffer from insomnia can give you insomnia.

I'm looking for a self-help book for editors of self-help books. In the meantime, if any publisher of romances or Westerns wants a hardworking, half-time editor, they can reach me care of this magazine.

Quick is just finishing her second novel, **Border Crossings.**

Stolen from **Newsweek** ***for August 31, 1992. Who could resist? Not me! I did actually pay the $25 once for using one very long article on California's public school dilemma, but I can't see doing that for a "quickie" like this one. They'll survive. Thanks,*** **Newsweek*!***

THE GOOD NEWS AND THE BAD NEWS

by James Fadiman

Good news! There is a drug that reduces the ill effects of glaucoma, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, the wasting syndrome of AIDS, chronic pain, migraines, and other illnesses. For many of these conditions it is the drug of choice. In individual cases it is the only drug which alleviates pain and suffering and prolongs life. Toxicity studies show it is remarkably safe, more than 400,000 times safer than tobacco, for example.

More good news is that the United States government itself grows, harvests and packages the plant which contains the drug. A "Compassionate Use Individual Treatment Directive" authorizes the government to supply the drug to those who need it. Early in June of 1991, Deputy National Drug Control Policy Director Herbert D. Kleber said to a national television audience that anyone with "a legitimate medical need" could get the drug.

The bad news is that on June 21 1991, James O. Mason, chief of the Public Health Service, announced that the program would be suspended. Since that date, hundreds of applications have been submitted, none have been accepted.

The good news is that the plant is widely available in all fifty states and is a major cash crop in several. The bad news is that all those sources are illegal, and, consequently, the drug is often too expensive for those who must take it daily. In addition not only growers, but buyers and users, criminalize themselves by helping themselves or those who suffer.

The good news is that there are few arrests or jail sentences. The bad news is that there are any. On September 21, 1993, for example, in Monticello, New York a 79-year-old grandmother was convicted of growing two plants for her grandson who had been dying of multiple sclerosis.

The bad news is that the government seems not to have the slightest intention of helping people who need this drug to live, but instead condemns them to earlier and more painful deaths.

The good news is that for the best known condition—recovering from the medical treatment of chemotherapy—sixty percent of cancer specialists would prescribe the drug if it were legal. Many prescribe it anyway, in spite of unremitting negative propaganda and in spite of potential risks to their own careers. The counter-forces are rising. The California Medical Association and the California State Legislature passed resolutions urging an end to federal prohibitions for medical uses.

The crazy news is that for the very, very few of you who haven't got it by now, we are talking about marijuana.

I thought I knew a lot about drugs and even more about drug effects. However, recently I've learned that I'd bought into some of the same nonsense ideas about marijuana that have been peddled by every narc since Harry Anslinger. In spite of my personal experience and those of damn near everyone I know, I held concerns and strictures that were nothing more than the stuff of pulp fiction or worse—the twisted ideas of the man in the red dress, J. Edgar Hoover.

What awakened me was reading *Marihuana: The Forbidden Medicine*, an even-handed report on the historical, pharmaceutical, anthropological and medical treatment research about marijuana by Lester Grinspoon, M.D. a tenured Harvard professor and James Bakalar, associate editor of *The Harvard Mental Health Letter*. As I recognized the nonsense I'd grown to believe, I felt as stupid as I did in the early days of the women's movement when I couldn't understand why women were dissatisfied or, earlier in my life, when I couldn't imagine that a person could get any feeling other than disgust by putting their tongue in someone else's mouth.

In case you are at all like me, ignorant of the medical values of marijuana, this book will help. If you suffer from migraines, seizures, have the potential for glaucoma, or might, at some time in your life, undergo chemotherapy; should you have AIDS or know anyone who does, then you need to know facts your government has soundly repressed for decades.

The reason for all this craziness is that marijuana has a major side effect: you feel better when you smoke it. That and that alone has made the plant a social pariah. On the other hand, tobacco is heavily subsidized, and, as one commentator said, "has recently been found to be four times worse than we thought before. Before all we knew was that it would kill you." And there is alcohol, which makes you feel good, then bad, then sick, and which eventually helps kill many more of us in ways undreamed of by tobacco.

Once you accept that we live in a madhouse, here are a few things you could do to recover from the ill effects of over 60 years of the Big Lie:

1. Learn the facts.

2. Gently urge your elected representatives to learn or admit they know the truth even if they can't say it. Hillary is a lot hipper than she looks, and while Bill Clinton may not have inhaled, he still passed the joint.

3. Support the hemp lobby that is arguing for hemp to be grown as a substitute for the wood used to make paper. As a multi-valued, ecologically sound crop, hemp looks promising.

4. If you go public with these ideas of saving lives, limiting human suffering, rendering mercy to the dying and the afflicted, and acting with compassion, the heat will come down on you faster than English critics surrounded Joan of Arc. Do nothing currently illegal. The same people who said Agent Orange isn't bad for you are still in power in lots of places. Be careful.

5. Notice the effects that a massive misconception can have on a culture, in this case ours.

6. Don't be impatient. Turning around heavily subsidized ignorance takes a long time.

Jim Fadiman is a writer living in Menlo Park, whose past includes considerable research into and during altered states (most of it published).

From the AHP Perspective for February 1994.

If you like the cut of Jim Fadiman's jib (like me!), look up his piece in the winter issue on the Trauma of the Month Club. It'll make you want to join (I don't think). It kept me warm for weeks amid winter's Sturm und Dreck (oder etwas!). Thanks again, Jim.

"WHO'S CALLING THE SHOTS?"

by Patricia Trudeau

Who's Calling the Shots? How to Respond Effectively to Children's Fascination with War Play and War Toys is a book by Nancy Carlsson Paige and Diane E. Levin. A friend gave it to me to read after hearing me tell the following story.

A young child, anxious to show me a new toy, put on a plastic shield, handed me a plastic sword and wanted me to use it! Taken by surprise, I put down the sword, said I didn't want to stab anyone, and tried to explain the best I could. The child accepted what I said about loving, kindness, etc. and that was it.

Yet, I continued to think about it. What had happened? My daughter Ann was married November 6, then came Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas. My other daughter Margaret gave birth to a son, Elijah, on Christmas morning. I was a grandmother and off to Louisville we went! With all these happy celebrations I had hardly noticed the second anniversary of Peter's (my twin brother) brutal stabbing before Thanksgiving. But a child's innocent enthusiasm had helped me get in touch with some unresolved feelings of grief so warm tears could bring healing.

As I share this with friends and family many questions arise. What can we do about violence: in our families; on T.V.; in our schools; and in our communities? *Who's Calling the Shots?* offers us hope because it suggests concrete things we can all do. We all want our children and grandchildren to grow up in a safe world where peace and harmony are real possibilities.

I don't know why my brother's life ended in violence. What I do know is that I can learn, grow and change by reading books such as this, in order to share the journey with you all in more meaningful ways.

Taken from The MESSENGER, newsletter of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Albany, New York for March, 1994. Patricia is the head of the Sunday School, a courageous person who has had to cope with a lot of violence in her own life, and has done so with real grace.

REVIEW:

Changing Lives: Voices from a School that Works,
by Jane Day, University Press of America, 1994
4720 Boston Way, Lanham, MD 20706
ISBN: 0-8191-9419-0 pb $25.

Reviewed by Mary Leue

Anyone who is searching for models or examples of schools that truly do the job they have been set up to accomplish is likely to be open to learning about schools that actually do this. I find this to be increasingly the case as our current school system fails to deliver that 'product' in a form that meets the needs of families. The exponential growth of non-public alternatives and the search for 'the one' which will meet the need goes on apace, as frantic parents discover in increasing numbers the depth of the jeopardy faced by their children at the hands of the existent schools offered by our society. We in the alternative education 'business' are hearing more and more cries for help from such people. Charter schools are springing up in ever-growing numbers, and the home school group is growing rapidly (See the letter from Jean Hedges on page 189 with the charter proposal her group has worked out).

Because these families come from an increasingly wide range of circumstances, it is no longer (almost) exclusively members of the middle class that are doing the searching. Families whose children are in trouble come from all walks of life—always have—and more and more families who live inside the ghettos of the cities are banding together to seek out better alternatives!

Among other things, this could be seen as the 'message' of this account by Jane Day of the lives of thirty-eight young adults who were lucky enough to have been included among the students of the Community School in Camden, Maine, during the last twenty years.

Thus, what happened to these particular children—what their 'presenting problems' were; what choices they made; how they resolved them; what has happened in their lives since that time—all of these considerations, as well as substantive issues like the actual functioning of the school—the 'how-to' that helped to create these results—all of these factors are brilliantly presented by the author, who was a teacher at the school for many years. Everything Jane Day is saying is true! The introduction by Deborah Meier, who also knows whereof she speaks, having been an organizer and the principal of Central Park East in New York City for many years, doubly underlines this authenticity.

But what is even more impressive to me than such an accomplishment by the author is the humanness of the choice she has made to focus on the stories of these thirty-eight people, both as narrated by her and, most significantly, as given to her by the ex-students themselves! For this reviewer, this perspective is the only real 'proof of the pudding'—and it eats very well indeed! This book is an absolute must, and reads like a delicious meal! Even at $25 it is a bargain, and delivers exactly what it promises! Buy it! Read it and smile!

Better still, send the school money to continue accomplishing this miracle! The address of the school is on the letterhead of Emanuel Pariser's letter on page 194.

And here are a few of the thirty-eight people whose stories form the bulk of this marvelous book! Read their stories!

Debbie and Dennis Pearse

Judy Fifield

Betsy Robertson

John Joseph

And this advertisement came in the mail a couple of days ago. It sounded pretty good to me, so I've included it, even though the source of information came from the publishing company, not from an independent reviewer. I figured a guy who taught in public school for 44 years and noticed the huge gap between the kids and the bureaucracy in education, and who believes in small groups and close contact with kids can't be all bad—or even half-bad!

REVIEW:

How to Trash Our Young via Public Education:
***A Practical Guide* by Joseph Najavits $12.95**
186-page original trade paperback
ISBN 9638307-5-7 LCCN 93-86162
Publication Date: May, 1994

CAN WE CRUMPLE AMERICA'S DUNCE CAP?

'America,' says Joseph Najavits, 'should put on a dunce cap for her stupidity in dealing irresponsibly with public education.' This purported 'guide' begins as a satire condemning the foolish procedures we follow nationwide to guarantee the continuation of our educational fiasco.

How to Trash Our Young via Public Education: A Practical Guide homes in on our long-standing problems, which include: the great gap in funding available to the rich and the poor; the lack of pre-school education for the majority of children; the impersonal teaching in the overcrowded classes of the large, factorylike school buildings, and the irrelevant, boring courses being offered the noncollege-bound in lieu of realistic vocational training—in short, the failure on all levels to meet *real* needs.

Najavits attacks the educational envy with which we flagellate ourselves in admiration of the superior performance of students in Japan, Germany, and France. He points out that their elite-oriented systems are so unlike ours as to make comparisons invalid and meaningless. He exposes the false promise of television, touted as a means of more effective education. Notwithstanding the hype of the billion-dollar electronics industry, he maintains that in reality, visuals in any form constitute only a running river of informational entertainment. 'Where,' he asks, 'is the necessary pause for thoughtful mental absorption? Where is the needed personal contact with another human being?'

Drawing on his 44 years of experience in the classroom, the author proposes practical strategies for overhauling our failed educational system: small classes of no more than 15 with personal give-and-take between teachers and students in downsized schools of no more than 600, managed by the staff working together as a team, and the transformation of schools into Care Centers addressing the academic, personal, social, psychological, and health needs of the whole child.

Rounding out his professional examination of our country's school system is a memoir recalling the experiences of a lifetime spent in the classroom and detailing his interaction with students and his unending battle with administrators.

Can we crumple America's dunce cap? 'Yes,' says Joseph Najavits, and he tells how in his lively, innovative, and practical *How to Trash Our Young via Public Education*—available in original trade paperback for $12.95 plus $3 shipping from

Open Vistas Publishing Company,
15 East 11th Street, New York, NY 10003-4429
1 -800-NEGLECT (634-5328).

LETTERS:

Jean Scott
1495 Dara Street
Camarillo, CA 93010

March 6, 1994.

Dear Mary,

Thank you for your personal attention to me to renew my interest in *ΣΚΟΛΕ*. The two issues you sent to me have sparked a reading interest again supporting alternative education. What a delight to learn about Herb Kohl's open school in Northern California. He was one of my favorite authors when he published his first book.

I teach at Bedford Open School, parent of the public district in Camarillo, CA—K-6, one class of each grade. The school opened its doors in 1976. My daughter was enrolled two years later and I spent many hours as a parent volunteer.

In 1984 I was hired as kindergarten teacher (having a Master's in Early Childhood). Because of my 'seniority' I am often called upon to discuss *philosophy*. I look forward to sharing your publication with staff and parents. Hopefully, I will stimulate them for more 'open' minds! (I've noticed more restrictions set upon us in the last ten years making it difficult to be truly OPEN—as insurance coverage, state frameworks in curriculum, overcrowded school classes, to name a few.)

Enclosed is my check for $30 to cover issues to me and for those years you have probably sent to another reader. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
Jean Scott

Folk Education Association of America
107 Vernon St.
Northampton, MA 01060
413/585-8755

March 7, 1994.

Mary Leue
72 Philip St.
Albany, NY 12202

Dear Mary,

Thanks for your recent letter about Skole (is that how you spell it when you don't have the proper letters on your machine???).

I have also had some correspondence with Ed Nagel in Santa Fe about our 'exchange of membership' (publications). He clarified that it did not include Skole as that was an independently produced journal.' My question to you then, is would you be interested in formally exchanging a subscription of Skole with our *OPTION* (the FEAA journal)? We may have talked about this at your Berkshire Live-out last summer???

Such an exchange could be as simple as keeping each other informed about each other's work to collaborating on a joint issue of the journals.

Our own OPTION is currently edited by Kay Parke of Black Mountain, NC, a co-founder of FEAA, (I enclose our recent issue). She is formally retiring at the end of this year and along with our search for a new editor, we'll be taking a fresh look at the journal and consider new directions.

I enclose a copy of a letter to the NCACS Board that I am sending to Ed so that you can read on about closer collaboration between our organizations.

Hope you are enjoying all our winter 94 snow in Albany! It's been beautiful here! Do you get to Ashfield in the high snows? I certainly enjoyed my all too brief visit there last summer! Hopefully a bit longer this coming one!

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Christopher Spicer
Chair, FEAA

COPY

March 7, 1994

NCACS Board of Directors
PO Box 15036
Santa Fe, NM 87506

Dear NCACS Board:

In recent correspondence with Ed Nagel in Santa Fe, Ed asked for my thoughts on what "shared memberships" means for FEAA. As I hope many of you know, FEAA and NCACS have "exchanged memberships" for the last couple of years, a relationship that Michael Traugot and I worked out.

It's important to keep this simple! The basic concept is to say to each other that because of significant common ground in our philosophies and purposes, we'd like to spend some minimal time and expense exchanging publications and perhaps attend each other's annual gatherings in the hopes that we 1) can see ourselves as partners (cousins perhaps?) in doing our work, and 2) might find some mutually important ways to work together.

In terms of determining our common ground, I recommend our brochure for an explanation of "who we are." As I wrote to Ed, "I have long viewed the philosophical and pedagogical bases of FEAA and NCACS as being very closely connected." We both espouse alternative models for life education, "committed to participant control in education, whereby students, parents, and staff create and implement their own learning programs....in intention, working to empower people to actively and collectively direct their lives; in form, requiring the active control of education by the students, parents, teachers, and community members who are most directly affected; in content, developing tools and skills to work for social justice." In using your words, I see little difference in intention or meaning with our own. Again to Ed: "The primary difference I see is that your focus is on elementary and secondary level and ours is on "adult" level. In my mind that differences is small, especially since both our memberships include both adult- and youth-oriented programs. Arthur Morgan School, for example, stands for the kind of education that we both espouse."

In terms of how we might work together, I only offer a mini self-brainstorm, one which I know would become richer and more exciting - and more practical among a group of FEAA and NCACS folks talking together. We are all busy people with our hands full of work where we are. So know that I include in this list ideas that we just don't have the time or resources to carry out. This list is in the spirit of possibilities:

- sharing articles from our newsletters
- doing a joint publication of our journals
- compiling joint resources (such as Joel Weber's computer file idea)
- sponsoring a joint annual conference
- joining forces in some joint political advocacy work
- collaborating in some international exchange programs

etc., etc., etc.

I hope this sparks some conversation and thinking about a stronger relationship between NCACS and FEAA. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Christopher Spicer
Chair, FEAA

and from your ΣΚΟΛΕ editor:

March 14, 1994.

Dear Chris,

Thanks for your good letter, and for the offer to exchange ΣΚΟΛΕ and the FEAA newsletter. I'd be honored! And thanks also for the copy of the letter you sent Ed Nagel. Like you, I see very little overt difference between the Coalition's value system and that of the Folk School people. If any. The main differences I see are the embeddedness of each group within certain cultural traditions (or lack thereof!). Mind you, I am in no way downplaying this difference, but merely saying that it exists and is very real. In the folk school 'movement,' there is an assimilation with populism which comes out of a long history of personal and cultural values and is backed up by a way of life that carries the tradition into real practice. In other words, it is based in the actual cultural tradition from which the participants have emerged, or is fairly assimilable into that tradition. Myles Horton and Arthur Morgan and his family to me represent the acme of that movement. The cover silhouettes on your publications represent the same honoring of human embodiments of this tradition. I once had the privilege of conversing with Griscom Morgan in Yellow Springs, and felt the sense of personal embeddedness in a clear tradition which he represented. Ernest is the same way.

In the case of the Coalition (NCACS), the origins of the leadership members, who are a pretty small and ingrown group, is very variable indeed. The 'lifestyle' and value system on which it is based is actually an amalgam of the best of the ideals represented by the childhood training of most of them, adhered to because it was so far from the *reality* of their upbringing, rather than the opposite. There are a few, like Arthur Morgan School, who have built directly on their own tradition, but not that many, really.

Or, on the other hand, the tradition from which they came might have actually been working class or immigrant-based upwardly mobile, which would tend to represent personal 'imprisonment,' including the involuntary influence of some religious tradition during their childhood. I used to be a Unitarian (birthright, of the greater Boston variety), and discovered that present-day Unitarianism is actually a mindless refuge for ex-Catholics, Jews, Fundamentalists, etc., who have 20-20 vision for what they opposed, but very little for what they might espouse! So a gifted person who grew up embedded in a tradition of mindless conformism to conventional values might rebel and carry their adolescent idealism into a search for like-minded people with whom to establish alternative institutions that would reflect these ideals.

In this respect the two groups would appear to be identical, viewed from the outside. The differences would only appear when one examined closely the actual behaviors of the leading members acting in concert. Lacking a belief in acknowledgment of the 'shadow' side of one's character structure, the tendency to become defensive and rigid when faced with discrepancies between ideal and real—like the personal idiosyncrasies of Ronald Reagan, who grew up in a poor, alcoholic family—and group denial of such problems, compounded by like-minded group policy-making, would result. And has. We've struggled with our friends in the Coalition since the mid-seventies to bring up such issues as relevant to the life of organization, any organization. I think these efforts are actually beginning to bear fruit, but it's been a long, long haul—and in the course of this process, the Coalition has lost many of its most dedicated, creative members. I'm just too pig-headed to quit, because in so many ways the *Geist* of the Coalition fits with my own populist upbringing as a small-town Yankee a number of whose ancestors came over on 'that boat.'

My own 'solution' to the virtually universal American neurosis of attempted disruptive assimilation into a 'common American culture,' which to me is non-existent, has been to build in a new 'tradition' into our community of on-going group examination of values, of support for the pain of disclosure, of encouragement toward change, of a sort the 'Course in Miracles' teaches! Or as Scott Peck, in both *The Road not Taken* and *The Different Drum*, teaches as the only true basis for community. And since we've been doing it since the early seventies, the results are very clear!

The miraculous aspect of this process is that so many of these schools, while lacking the cultural embeddedness of the folk school movement, are creating new cultural and educational patterns in which children are able to grow and flourish! I count such places as Sudbury Valley School, in Framingham, Massachusetts, as the Alternative Community High School in Ithaca, New York, as the Community School in Camden, Maine, as the East Hill School in Andover, Vermont, as Contra Costa High School in Orinda, California, as the Meeting School in Rindge, New Hampshire, as Clonlara in Ann Arbor, Michigan, as Grass Roots Free School, in Tallahassee, Florida, as Headwaters, in Pettigrew, Arkansas, as Peninsula School, in Menlo Park, California, as New Orleans Free School, in New Orleans, Lousiana, as Upattinas School, in Glenmoore, Pennsylvania, as Greenbriar School, in Elgin, Texas, as Highland School, in Highland, West Virginia, as the New School of Northern Virginia, in Vienna, Virginia, as the Community School, in Roanoke, Virginia, and a few others I can't think of at the moment, as of this genre.

I think this is the best we can really do in America, at this point. And I expect the Folk Movement in America faces the same paradoxes we do in the Coalition, if truth be told, since none of us *really* embodies any clear tradition! We are all struggling to 'make it up as we go along!' At least, I know we are! The main source of self-proclaimed difference might be that the Coalition is more ideological, more orthodoxically self-definitional in identity, more likely to draw distinctions between mine and thine than you.

Well, you can see you inadvertently tapped into a rich vein of feeling and words when you sent me on the letter from Ed. I go back in *my* history of alternative education to my own New England small town transferred 'dame school' and Froebelian traditions among 'nice' people. But the pain of the poor, who were my childhood friends, led to my efforts to bring the freedom tradition of Summerhill and the therapeutic healing of the New York City First Street School of George and Mabel Dennison among the children of society's outcasts into a setting shared equally with the children of the prosperous middle classes. Reaching out for like-minded school founders led to the creation by a group of nine or ten others, of an organization which came to be called the New Schools Exchange, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in February, 1972 or 3, in the basement of a Baptist Church!

That movement spread like wildfire, and hundreds of 'free schools' sprang up among sixties rebels now looking for something of value for their children. But within three years, the emphasis switched from the reformist tradition of the northeastern cities to the 'bliss bunny,' personal transformation movement of California, and the two wings clashed fatally in New Orleans! So that organization gradually died, and a new one arose in Chicago, the NCACS, which began under the sponsorship of Jack Wuest and the New Schools Network. More rule-bound, more exclusionary, more consciously ideological, more tribal, perhaps, than its predecessor, but more broadly based in the heartland mid-west, not just east coast-west coast.

Hope to see you again next summer in Ashfield! We're working on a video of the dialogue that went on among us all that week. It promises to be pretty exciting!

How about planning to come and give us a talk on the FEAA movement next summer? We'll take care of your delightful son! Mid-July, that is!

Love,
Mary Leue

The Community School
P.O. Box 555 • Camden. Maine • 04843 • 236-3000

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Dear Mary,

Thanks for the unform/form letter of December 5. I am enclosing my subscription renewal and thanks to you particularly for having encouraged me in my efforts to write. You have done that for lots of us, and I think telling our stories is one of the crucial things for us to be doing—us meaning the we who are involved in something called alternative education.

I am really tickled that you chose a couple of my articles for the second volume of *Challenging the Giant*—grow ego growl And it is delightful to me that people will read some of our stories, homegrown and bred, and maybe, just maybe get inspired to write some of their own, or better yet hatch some new ones.

I am enclosing the flyer for our book: *Changing Lives: Voices from a School That Works* —you may have gotten it bulk mail, but I thought it would be great if somebody at SKOLE would review it. You can get a free review copy from Jean Webb at the University Press of America whose # is 1-800-462-6420. You'll get customer service and ask them to transfer you over to Jean. Her extension is #37 I believe. Her address is 4720 Boston Way, Lanham Maryland, 20706. The book is frightfully expensive (*$25!*), so I'm hoping that doesn't scare everyone off.

The other request is that you might consider carrying it as one of the books in your catalogue. Do you do that? I think we have to do most, if not all of the work to publicize*Changing Lives*, so, here I am doing it. It was wonderful getting the little blurbs from famous people! (See editor's review of*Changing Lives* on page 178!)

Finally if you have ideas for other magazines, reviews, etc. who would review or excerpt the book, please let me know and I'll work on it. And, among your myriad other duties please pass the word on about the book.

Things at the School are satisfying and chaotic, with the thunderstorms of funding fiascos sounding in the not too distant future—state funding as always is imperilled by Maine's disastrous economy and the general state of the country's economic health. I spend too much time trying to build thunderstorm defenses under which we can gain cover and wait out the worst of it. I'd like to be spending more time teaching and writing—but at least I can pop off a letter to you, and that in itself is rejuvenating.

Finally, I've been listening to Orwell's "Such, Such, Were the Joys" his reminisces on his own "public school" education in England and it is a must for all educators—a wonderful piece of writing. I hope you are well and enjoying the tightrope.

Love, Emanuel (Pariser)

Jean Hedges
40564 Calle Katerine
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(909) 695-2733

January 22, 1994.

Dear Mary,

Thank you for your time on the telephone. I really enjoyed our conversation, and I apologize for taking so long to write you. Our charter school project is moving along with more momentum than I had anticipated and is rapidly turning into a full-time job. As a mother of two young children, I can't imagine doing anything more rewarding.

If our charter is successful, it will be the first in the State to be started by parents, although this is very much in the spirit of the Bill which seeks to give parents choices in education.

Our group is very enthusiastic about extensive parental involvement in our children's schooling. Many of us are currently involved in a parent cooperative preschool. We have specific work days, and we are trained to assist the teacher/director in the classroom in a para-professional (and loving) capacity. I personally prefer this to total home schooling, if possible, because the teacher serves as a mentor which has helped me to improve both my parenting and teaching skills.

Our group of parents want to continue this involvement in our children's education. We also want to get away from the factory model that is typical of public education, yet most of us cannot afford private schools. We are hopeful we can create something better.

This has been an incredible learning experience. My dear friend Bhasha who is working with me on the charter calls it a 'spiritual' experience.

We would love any advice or direction you may wish to offer.

Sincerely,
Jean Hedges

PURPOSE OF A CHARTER

Charter schools may operate independently from the existing school district structure for the purpose of

a) Improving student learning

b) Increasing learning opportunities for all students;

c) Encouraging the use of different and innovative teaching methods;

d) Creating new professional opportunities for teachers including the opportunity to be responsible for the program;

e) Providing parents and students with expanded choices within the public school system; and

f) Holding the schools accountable for meeting measurable student outcomes.